ON THE TRAIL OF WASHINGTON

FREDERICK TREVOR HILL

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ON THE TRAIL OF WASHINGTON

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Loving wishes for many happy years for J. Merryman Hatfield from his 'old comrade.'

Sam Merryman

May 7th 1911

WASHINGTON BRINGING A GUN INTO ACTION AT THE MONONGAHELA AMBUSH.

July 9, 1755.

NATIONAL HOLIDAY SERIES

TRADE MARK

ON THE TRAIL OF WASHINGTON

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF WASHINGTON'S BOYHOOD AND MANHOOD, BASED ON HIS OWN WRITINGS, AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS AND OTHER AUTHORITATIVE INFORMATION

BY

FREDERICK TREVOR HILL

AUTHOR OF "LINCOLN THE LAWYER," "THE STORY OF A STREET," ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR BY ARTHUR E. BECHER

NEW YORK AND LONDON
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1910

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Published February, 1910

TO

MY OLD COMRADE

TREVOR

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H63

FOREWORD

For more than a century Washington was exalted as a model of manners and morals—and portrayed as a prig; he was idealized as a hero—and rendered unreal; he was glorified as the father of his country—and denied all human fellowship with his kin; he was invested with every virtue—and divested of all virile character. That he survived in the affections of his people is the best demonstration of his true greatness.

Of recent years, however, there has been a notable effort to depict the man as he really was—a man with good red blood in his veins, good common sense in his head, good kindly feeling in his heart, and a good honest laugh.

This humanizing of Washington has been the work of eminent editors, historians, and

M316000

collectors, and their investigations during the past twenty years have virtually revealed Washington to Americans for the first time. They have winnowed the traditions from the facts, exposed the myths, frauds, and forgeries associated with his name, clarified his military movements, and justified, if not necessitated, the rewriting of much of our early history. It is no longer true that Washington is " only a steel engraving." Yet little of this valuable information has been brought home to the general reader and still less of it has reached the younger generation.

It is to place before such readers, young and old, the results of this modern research that the writer retells the story of Washington in these pages, and to the distinguished authorities upon whom he has relied he herewith makes grateful acknowledgment. Particularly is he indebted to Mr. Samuel Palmer Griffin for his scholarly sifting of the great mass of material forming the basis of this volume and for his careful revision of the text.

Washington was not always as old as the

Gilbert Stuart portraits indicate, nor did he fight his battles in a powdered wig; the writer accordingly begs to express his thanks to the illustrator, Mr. Arthur Becher, whose conscientious study has enabled him to combine artistic values with minute historic detail and to disregard all traditions which are not firmly grounded in well-authenticated facts.

FREDERICK TREVOR HILL.

NEW YORK, December, 1909.

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ON THE TRAIL OF WASHINGTON

CHAPTER I

PLANTATION PLAYGROUNDS

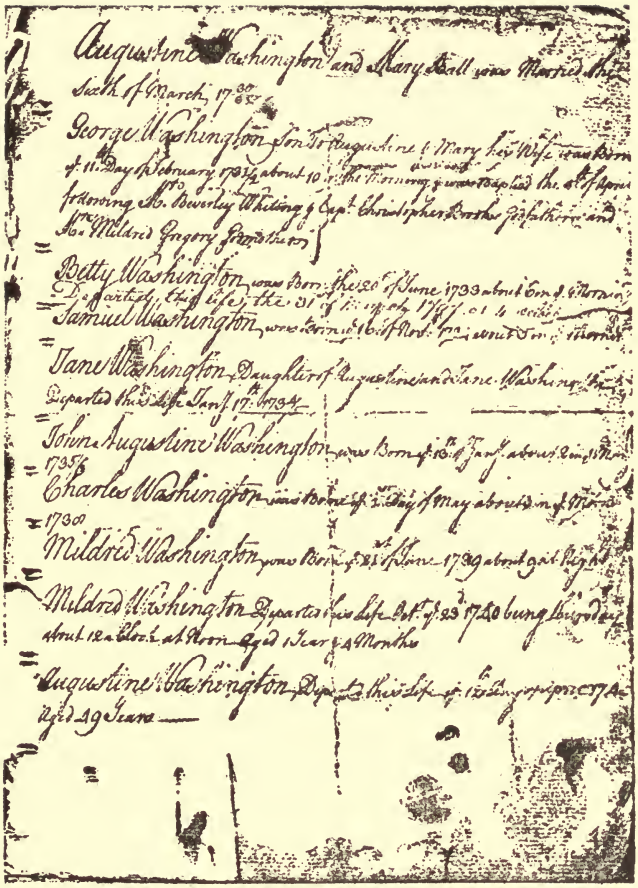
WASHINGTON was a born and bred country boy. His father, Augustine Washington, owned three farms or plantations, not far distant from each other in Virginia, and on one of them (which was later called "Wakefield") Washington was born on February 22, 1732.

The farmhouse which his family then occupied was a queer little two-storied structure, with a steep, sloping roof, two big chimneys, four rooms on the ground floor and perhaps as many more in the attic. It was built close to the Potomac River, between two streams known, respectively, as Bridge's Creek and Pope's Creek, and all around it lay tobacco and corn fields fringed with forests. In later years this place became very familiar

to the boy, but while he was still a mere baby his family moved to another of his father's farms farther up the Potomac, and here he lived until he was nearly eight years old.

This plantation was then known as Epsewasson or Hunting Creek, and it was well named, for the surrounding woods were full of quail, grouse, wild turkeys, foxes, and deer, and the creeks and rivers were fairly alive with fish. Indeed, the whole country was famous for its game, and from the Indians who lived in the neighboring forests Washington undoubtedly learned something about shooting and fishing, for they were experts with the rod and gun, and knew far more about the habits of wild animals and fish than any of the white men. But fond as he was of such sport, the boy was still fonder of horses, and he probably never remembered the time when he first sat astride of a pony. Certainly he began learning to ride at a very early age and he had no lack of good instructors, for Virginians, then as now, prided themselves on their horsemanship, and most of the planters were in the saddle from morning till night.

Altogether, the farm on Hunting Creek was a delightful spot for a lad like Washing-



FLY LEAF OF THE FAMILY BIBLE, SHOWING RECORD OF WASHINGTON'S BIRTH WRITTEN BY HIM WHILE A BOY.

(From the original in the possession of Mrs. Lewis Washington, of Charleston, W. Va.)

ton who loved sport and adventure, but it would have been a bit lonely had it not been for his brothers and sisters, as the nearest house was far away and there were no schools or common meeting places for children. Fortunately, however, there was plenty of comradeship right in the family circle, for Washington had a sister and a brother old enough to be very companionable, and two still younger brothers who later proved excellent playmates. Moreover, in the negro quarters there were a number of boys and girls who were allowed to join the white children in all their games, and for five years the woods about the plantation, which was later named "Mount Vernon," echoed with the shouts and laughter of a very merry company of youngsters. Then one day the house burned down and the family moved to another farm on the Rappahannock River, almost directly opposite the little town of Fredericksburg.

This plantation, sometimes called the "Ferry Farm," closely resembled the others. The house was a small, plain, wooden building, very simply but strongly constructed and painted a dark red. Around it lay tobacco, wheat, and corn fields, bordered, as at the other

homes, with inviting and more or less mysterious woods. Until he arrived there Washington had been allowed to run free, without schooling of any kind, and it is doubtful if he then knew even his letters, although he was already in his eighth year.

He had, however, learned much that is not taught in books. He knew how to take care of himself in the open, how to make friends with horses and dogs, how to ride and fish and swim, how to lay out camps and build camp fires, how to recognize the tracks of wild animals, how to blaze or mark a trail—all the thousand and one things which a quick-witted, out-of-doors boy learns from country life. Best of all, he had grown tall and strong and hardy from his life in the open air, storing up strength and health for the time when steady nerves and a sound body were essential for the work he had to do, and with these advantages his schoolboy days began.

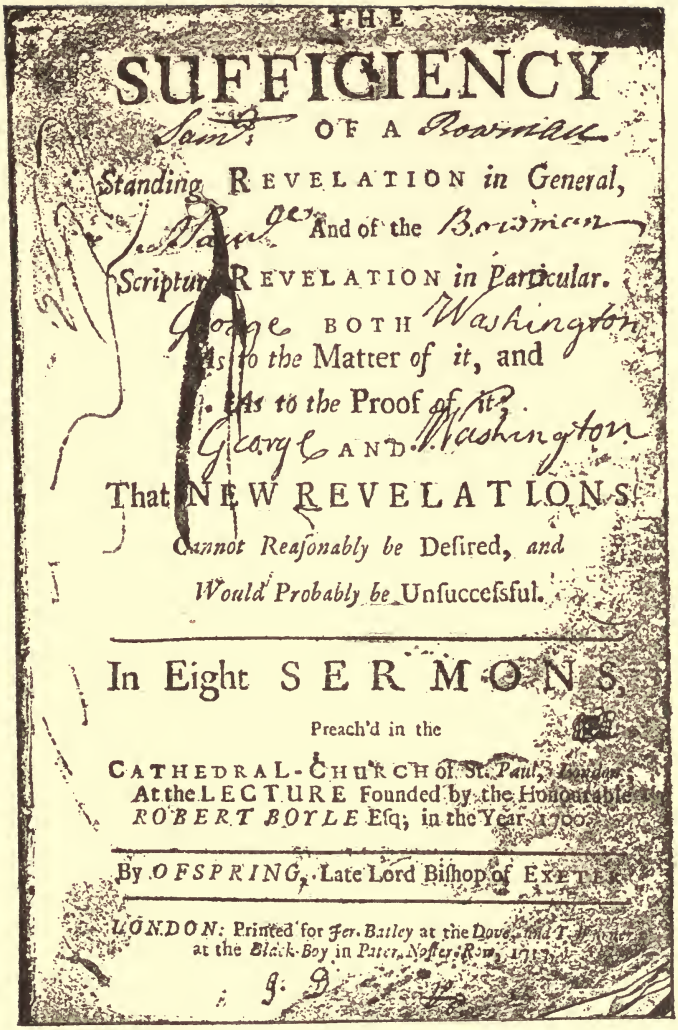
CHAPTER II

SCHOOL DAYS

WASHINGTON'S first school was not much more than a hut in the woods, in charge of a schoolmaster who knew very little more than his pupils. In those days it was difficult to procure good teachers in Virginia, and the instructor selected for this "old field school," as it was called, was a man known as Hobby, who had been transported from England as a punishment for some minor offense against the laws. Such men were usually sold for a term of years to residents of the colonies, and Hobby was apparently bought by Washington's father or one of his neighbors, who made him sexton of the local chapel and utilized his small store of knowledge for the benefit of the children. How much Washington learned from this queer schoolmaster is not positively known, but it is certain that he was soon taught to write, for he scrawled his name all

over a volume of sermons when he was eight or nine years old, and that book, with his boyish signatures, can be seen to-day in one of the Boston libraries. Indeed, Washington, like a great many other boys, was rather fond of scribbling, and some of his books which have been preserved are said to be liberally adorned with pictures of birds, animals, people, and other drawings worthy of the most incorrigible "Goop."

Hobby claimed in later years that his famous pupil acquired the best of his education in the little cabin schoolhouse, but it is certain that the most valuable things the boy learned in those early years he owed to his father and mother. They brought him up strictly but sensibly, teaching him the importance of sharp obedience, manliness, courage, and honor, and otherwise laying the real foundations of his character; but most of the stories concerning his boyhood, such as the one about the cherry tree and the hatchet, are sheer nonsense. For many years his family had occupied a prominent place in Virginia, and Mr. and Mrs. Washington took a proper pride in training their children to uphold its best traditions, and in this they succeeded. Unfor-



THE

SUFFICIENCY

Sam^t. OF A Bowman

Standing REVELATION in General,

Paul^ge And of the Bowman

Scripture REVELATION in Particular.

George BOTH Washington

As to the Matter of it, and

As to the Proof of it.

George AND Washington

That NEW REVELATIONS

Cannot Reasonably be Desired, and

Would Probably be Unsuccessful.

In Eight SERMONS,

Preach'd in the

CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of St. Paul, London,

At the LECTURE Founded by the Honourable

ROBERT BOYLE Esq; in the Year 1700.

By OFSPRING, Late Lord Bishop of EXETER.

LONDON: Printed for Jer. Batley at the Dove, and T. Warner at the Black-Boy in Pater-Noster-Row, 1713.

EARLIEST-KNOWN SIGNATURES OF WASHINGTON SCRAWLED AT THE AGE OF ABOUT EIGHT ACROSS THE FLY LEAF OF A BOOK OF SERMONS.

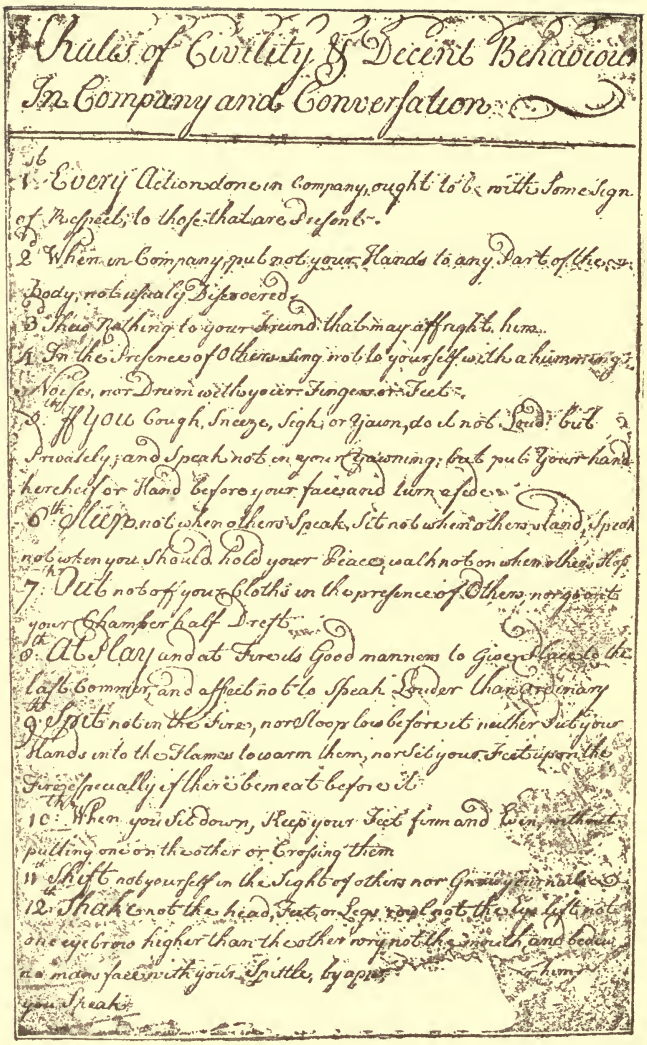
(From the original in possession of the Boston Athenæum.)

tunately for Washington his father died when he was only eleven, but his mother proved a wise friend and counselor, and shortly after her husband's death she sent him to an excellent school kept by a Mr. Williams near "Wakefield."

It was not books or book learning, however, that made the deepest impression upon the maturing mind of the boy, but rather his association with his half-brothers, Augustine and Lawrence. Up to this time he had seen very little of these young men, for they had been at school in England for several years, and after their return the elder, Lawrence, had been made a captain in the English army and had gone to the West Indies, where he had taken an active part in the campaign against the Spaniards, while Augustine had settled as a planter on the "Wakefield" farm. After his father's death, however, Washington was constantly in their company, and the two brothers took a great fancy to him. He was then a bright, promising lad, rather large for his age, fond of all outdoor games, and an exceptionally good horseman. Moreover, he was a good shot, a daring huntsman, and a keen woodsman, ready for any sort of sport or

adventure, and it is no wonder that Lawrence and Augustine Washington took delight in his companionship. Both of them were educated, honorable men who had seen more of the world than most Virginians, and it was fortunate for Washington that he had their guidance and advice at this period of his career. Doubtless they were proud of his manly accomplishments and encouraged them, but they also showed him that he was expected to be something better than a horse trainer or a hunter, and set him an excellent example of useful work and decent living.

Captain Lawrence Washington exerted a particularly strong influence in molding his young kinsman into a gentleman, and some of the happiest hours that the lad ever knew were passed at the plantation on Hunting Creek, which Lawrence had inherited from his father, and which he had named "Mount Vernon" in honor of Admiral Vernon with whom he had served in the Spanish war. Here Washington became acquainted with many of his brother's comrades in arms, and here he frequently met officers of the Royal Navy and of the big merchant ships which sailed into the Potomac, and listened to many



Rules of Civility & Decent Behaviour
In Company and Conversation.

1. Every Action done in Company, ought to be with Some Sign of Respect, to those that are Present.

2. When in Company, put not your Hands to any Part of the Body, not usually Discovered.

3. Show Nothing to your friend that may affright him.

4. In the Presence of Others, Sing not to your self with a humming Noise, nor Drum with your Fingers or Feet.

5. If You Cough, Sneeze, Sigh, or Yawn, do it not Loud but Privately; and Speak not in your Yawning, but put Your handkerchief or Hand before your face and turn aside.

6. Sleep not when others Speak, Sit not when others stand, Speak not when you Should hold your Peace, walk not on when others Stop.

7. Put not off your Clothes in the presence of Others, nor go out your Chamber half Dress't.

8. At Play and at Fire it's Good manners to Give Place to the last Comer, and affect not to Speak Louder than Ordinary.

9. Spit not in the Fire, nor Stoop low before it neither Put your Hands into the Flames to warm them, nor Set your Feet upon the Fire, especially if there be meat before it.

10. When you Sit down, Keep your Feet firm and Even, without putting one over the other or Crossing them.

11. Shift not yourself in the Sight of others nor Gnaw your nails.

12. Shake not the head, Feet or Legg, roll not the Eyes, lift not one eyebrow higher than the other wry not the mouth, and bedew no mans face with your Spittle, by approaching him when you Speak.

PAGE OF AN EXERCISE BOOK, SHOWING SOME OF THE "RULES OF CIVILITY" WRITTEN BY WASHINGTON FROM DICTATION IN SCHOOL.

(From the original in the Department of State.)

a story of adventure on land and sea. Under such circumstances it is not at all surprising that he soon began to think he would like to be a sailor, and had his mother not interfered he would certainly have gone to sea at the age of fourteen, for Captain Lawrence encouraged the idea and actually took some steps to procure him a suitable commission. Fortunately, however, Mrs. Washington, whose brother had written her that the career of a sailor was not fit for any promising boy, promptly forbade the plan, and her son returned to her at the " Ferry Farm " to finish his schooling under a Fredericksburg clergyman named James Marye, who taught him a little Latin and generally improved his education.

In the Rev. Mr. Marye's library was a curious old French book and an English translation of the same, and from these volumes he used to dictate to his pupils, who wrote down what was read to them. In this way Washington filled a small exercise book with a number of rules entitled " Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation," and these rules, just as he wrote them, can be seen to-day in the State Department at the

national capital. Some people have supposed that Washington invented those rules, but no natural, wholesome boy, such as he was, would ever have spent his time in this way. He wrote them as part of his school work and he did it very neatly, but the only original thing about them was his spelling, which would to-day be regarded as rather poor for a boy of fourteen, but which was not bad for those days, when dictionaries were practically unknown, and even the schoolbooks themselves were frequently misspelled. Perhaps the "Rules of Civility" helped to impress some of the elements of good manners on his mind, but they did not make him courteous or generous or considerate of others. Those qualities are not learned from copy books. He acquired them, like any other manly-spirited boy of his age, from associating with cultivated men and women, and having sense enough to understand what it is that makes a gentleman worthy of the name. Good manners thus became a habit with him just as natural as breathing, and in somewhat the same way he acquired the habits of neatness and thoroughness.

Washington was neither a student, nor a

George Washington

THE

Young Man's Companion:

OR,

Arithemetick made Eaſy 1742

WITH

Plain Directions for a Young Man to attain to Read and Write true *Engliſh*, with Copies in Verſe for a Writing School, Indicting of Letters to Friends, Forms for making Bills, Bonds, Releaſes Wills, *&c.*

LIKEWISE,

Eaſy Rules for the Meaſuring of Board and Timber, by the Carpenter's Plain-Rule, and by Fractions; with Tables for ſuch as have not learned Arithmetick: And to compute the Charge of Building a Houſe or any Part thereof.

Alſo Directions for Meaſuring, Guaging, and Plotting of Land by *Gunter's* Chain, and taking heights and diſtances by the Quadrant and Triangle. The Uſe of *Gunter's* Line in Meaſuring Globes, Bullets, Walls, Cones, Spire Steeples, and Barrels: With the Art of Dialling, and Colouring of Work within and without Doors. Directions for Dying of Stuffs, *&c.*

Together with a Map of the Globe of the Earth and Water; and *Copernicus's* Deſcription of the viſible World. Alſo a Map of *England*; and to know which are Cities, and their Diſtance from *London*.

Choice Monthly Obſervations for Gardening Planting, Grafting, Inoculating Fruit-Trees, and the beſt Time to Prune them; and the making Wine of Fruit: With experienc'd Medicines for the Poor.

An Account of *Curioſities in* London *and* Weſtminſter.

Written by *W. Mather*, in a plain an eaſy Stile, that a a young Man may attain the ſame without a Tutor.

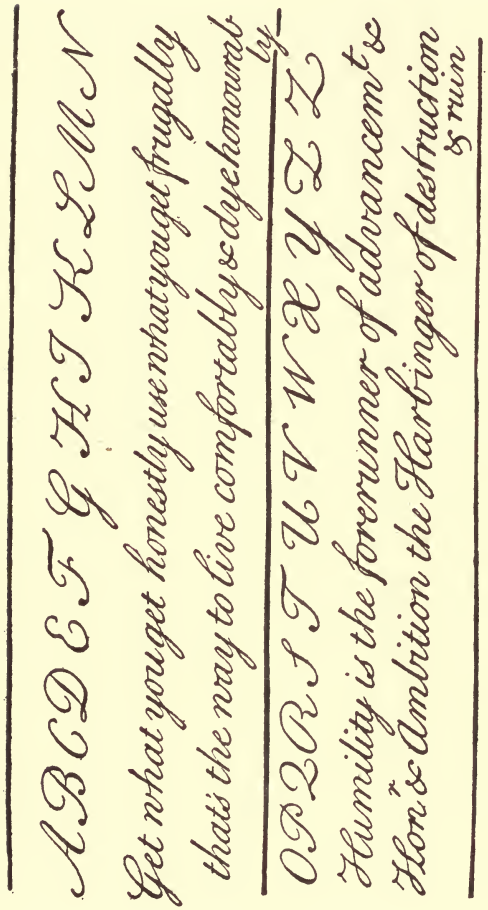
The Thirteenth Edition; *With many Additions and Alterations, eſpecially of the* Arithmetick, *to the Modern Method.*

London: Printed for *S. Clarke*, the Corner of *Exchange-Alley*, next *Birchin Lane*, 1727.

FLY LEAF OF ONE OF WASHINGTON'S SCHOOL BOOKS, SHOWING HIS SIGNATURE AT THE AGE OF TEN.

(From the collection of George Arthur Plimpton, Esq.)

Easy Copies to Write by.



COPY OF PENMANSHIP BY WHICH WASHINGTON'S HANDWRITING WAS FORMED.

(From the collection of George Arthur Plimpton, Esq.)

scholar, nor a solemn " old man " of a boy who posed as a pattern in any way. He was a lively, quick-tempered, companionable youngster who wrestled with the boys and romped with the girls, but had an abundance of good, hard, common sense constantly at his command. His schoolmates quickly realized this and he was frequently selected to decide disputes, not as an outsider, but as a fellow who could be serious when occasion required and was known to play fairly and squarely at every sort of sport.

But though he was not particularly studious, Washington could work as hard as he could play, and he had gumption enough to know that if a thing is worth doing it is worth doing well. One of his schoolbooks, called " The Young Man's Companion," is still in existence, and from its exercises anyone can see where he acquired his good, clear handwriting, and how faithfully he stuck to its figures and accounts until he trained himself to exactness and order. There were plenty of boys in Virginia who were quite as well educated and promising as he was at the age of sixteen, but the little he had learned from books he had learned thoroughly. Cer-

tainly, if he had been asked at the close of his school days what he could do to earn his own living, he would not have had to hesitate for an answer. He could write a good hand, figure correctly and neatly, keep simple accounts, and make an acceptable survey of land.

CHAPTER III

SURVEYING AND SPORTSMANSHIP

Land surveying, or the art of measuring land, was one of the many things taught in "The Young Man's Companion," and Washington must have been under fourteen when he began applying its rules, for at that age he made a rough drawing of the hills about Mount Vernon, showing the dimensions of some of the fields, and this early specimen of his skill can still be seen in the Department of State. It was fascinating work for a boy who was fond of outdoor life, for most of it had to be done in the open air, and it was interesting to discover and mark the boundaries of the plantation with the aid of the surveying instruments. Moreover, it promised to fit him for earning his own living, as Virginia lay at the very edge of the wilderness in those days and very few landowners knew where their property began or ended. This was not of

much importance when there were very few houses or people, but as the number of settlers increased, every one was anxious to know where to put up his fences. There was, therefore, plenty of work for good surveyors, and it was this prospect that encouraged Washington to begin preparing himself for the profession. Indeed, it was highly necessary for him to make an early start at earning his living, for although his father had owned a great many acres of land and had provided that the "Ferry Farm" should become his when he was twenty-one, the property was not valuable, and his mother and younger brothers and sisters were to some extent dependent upon it for their support.

Perhaps the idea that he should become a surveyor originated with his elder brothers, but it is not at all unlikely that the suggestion came from a somewhat peculiar old gentleman who was a constant visitor at Lawrence Washington's house and owned great tracts of land near Mount Vernon. This gentleman was Lord Thomas Fairfax, a rather lonely old bachelor, who had come from England to examine his Virginia estates and had grown to like the country so well that he had remained

SURVEY OF MOUNT VERNON MADE BY WASHINGTON WHEN ABOUT FOURTEEN.

(From the original in the Department of State.)

there, delighting in the freedom and solitude of the woods. At times, however, the life must have been a little too solitary for a man who had been educated at Oxford University and had seen service in the army and moved in the best society in London, and it is no wonder that he made the most of his hospitable neighbors. Washington was still at school in Fredericksburg when he first met this gentleman, but he spent most of his spare time at his brother's house, and Lord Fairfax, finding him to be a well-mannered, modest lad who could back any sort of horse and ride over any sort of country, often invited him to go hunting, and from that time on their friendship steadily increased.

Fox hunting was almost a passion with Lord Fairfax, and although he was then fully sixty years old, few men in the country could ride harder or straighter than he, but he soon found that Washington could follow wherever he led. Day after day the old nobleman, in his black-velvet cap, green coat, buckskin breeches, and top boots, would take to the saddle, surrounded by his hounds, and the longer the chase and the more difficult the country, the better he enjoyed the sport. Washington

fully shared the veteran's enthusiasm, and many a run they made together, following the dogs over ditches and fences wherever their horses could follow the trail, and it was during these hours in the saddle that Lord Fairfax discovered what sort of fellow his young companion was. Probably he knew that a man shows his true character more plainly during a day in the field or while playing some game than at any other time. If he is boastful or selfish or tricky, he cannot conceal it then, and if he is modest, generous, and honorable, that will soon appear. Thus, all unconsciously, Washington demonstrated, not merely that he was a skillful horseman, but that he had in him the makings of a first-class man, for he never stooped to an unsportsmanlike action, never bragged, very seldom talked about himself, and was evidently anxious to succeed at his chosen profession. This, in time, led Lord Fairfax to invite him to use his library—one of the few available collections of books in Virginia—and to encourage him to read English history and *The Spectator*, a famous magazine for which his host had occasionally written; and a diary which the boy kept of how and where he spent his time,

shows that he availed himself of these privileges.

Meanwhile, he was not only attending school, but was gaining practical experience in surveying under Mr. James Genn, the licensed surveyor of Westmoreland County, and many of that official's surveys which are still in existence are written in Washington's neat, businesslike hand. Indeed, he showed such a keen interest in this work that when Lord Fairfax decided to learn the extent of his lands beyond the Blue Ridge, he offered his young hunting companion a chance to prove what he was worth as a surveyor, and with this opportunity Washington's school days ended.

CHAPTER IV

A FIRST OPPORTUNITY

It is not to be supposed that Washington was at this time a skilled surveyor, or that Lord Fairfax offered him employment because he had displayed unusual talents of any kind. Nothing could be further from the truth. He was a cheerful, well-mannered, pleasant fellow, who had had the advantage of good home training, but he was by no means brilliant. The average intelligent boy of sixteen was certainly his equal and possibly his superior in mental attainments. He had, however, developed more systematic habits than most boys of his age and had shown himself unmistakably in earnest about his work, so that when a chance came to him, as it does to every one sooner or later, he was ready to grasp it. He did not have "luck"—he had a well-earned opportunity and sufficient sense to make the most of it.

A FIRST OPPORTUNITY

The task of surveying the Fairfax estate beyond the Blue Ridge was, of course, far too important and difficult to be wholly intrusted to a boy of his years, and the party to which he was assigned included Mr. Genn, his former instructor in surveying, Colonel George Fairfax, one of Lord Fairfax's relatives, and several men to assist in the minor duties of the work. Before they could start on the trip, however, it was necessary to make careful preparations, for the estate lay in a most inaccessible wilderness. Pack horses, provisions, tents, and camp supplies of all kinds were therefore procured and the whole outfit sorted into loads adjusted to the strength of each animal. All this consumed several days, and it was March 11, 1748, only a few weeks after Washington's sixteenth birthday, when the little group of horsemen headed for the mountains.

It was still early enough in the Spring for cold weather, and the melting ice and snow had swollen the rivers and brooks to rushing torrents, which could be crossed only by swimming the horses. This was no new experience to Washington, for he was well accustomed to riding over rough country in every sort of weather, but all the camping he had previ-

ously done was luxurious compared to the real life in the woods upon which he now entered. Indeed, he soon found that he was not as good a woodsman as the rest of the party, for he tried to improve on their accommodations early in the trip by seeking shelter in a settler's cabin, with the result that he was almost eaten alive with vermin, and laughingly resolved to follow his companions' example thereafter and trust to the open air and a fire. On another occasion his inexperience proved much more serious, for during one of the temporary encampments he made a bed for himself on a pile of straw so close to the fire that a spark set it ablaze while he was sleeping, and he might have been severely injured had not one of the men awakened in time to pull him out of danger.

Bad roads and worse weather made the traveling slow and the work exceedingly laborious, and at the close of two weeks of the roughest living which Washington had ever known the company was still far from their journey's end. At this point they encountered a band of Indians who had evidently been on the warpath, for they exhibited a scalp and performed a wild war dance for the surveyors'

benefit. Washington wrote a careful and rather humorous description of this strange performance in a memorandum book, wherein he noted everything of interest which occurred on the trip, and the knowledge of Indian manners and customs which he gained proved exceedingly useful before he was much older. Two whole days were passed in the company of the red men and then the travelers again plunged into the wilderness for another week's hard riding. At last, however, they reached their destination and, pitching their tents, settled down to the real business of the trip.

All surveyors in those days worked with three assistants, two known as chainmen, because they carried the measuring chain, and the third called the poleman or pilot, because he carried the pole by which the instruments were sighted; and day after day Washington was busily employed with these men, sometimes under Mr. Genn's direction, but often without supervision of any kind. His surveying duties did not occupy all his time, however, for the horses had to be pastured and watered, and there was always much work to be done each day about the camp, such as set-

ting up and taking down the tents, cutting wood, building fires, and carrying water. Each man was his own cook, broiling whatever meat there was at the end of sticks held over the fire, but there was no washing of dishes or plates, for large chips of wood served in that capacity, and hunting knives were the only table utensils. For food the surveyors soon had to rely on their guns, and several wild turkeys were shot, one weighing as much as twenty pounds, but Washington's diary records that he missed two shots at these birds in one morning, which he might well do and still be a fair marksman, as anyone can testify who has flushed a wild turkey in the forests and heard the terrifying whirr of its mighty wings.

Of course, as the surveyors were constantly moving forward, no very permanent camps could be erected, and the weather frequently made the living very uncomfortable, for the tents were blown down again and again during storms, and their occupants obliged to sleep on the ground. These mishaps often caused heavy work for everybody, but Washington took it all good-naturedly, invariably making the best of things and never trying to

WASHINGTON WORKING AS A SURVEYOR AT SIXTEEN YEARS OF AGE.

March–April, 1748.

shirk. A boy of different character, finding himself a novice among the backwoodsmen with whom much of his work was done, might perhaps have tried to win their regard and show himself a man by imitating and outdoing them in coarse manners and speech. But Washington, young as he was, had too much sense and self-respect for that. He knew that the older and rougher men would begin by laughing at him and end by despising him if he tried to become one of them by any such means. He therefore watched their methods of work and imitated all the woodcraft they displayed, but wisely refrained from copying their manners or coarsening his mind. As a result, they liked and respected him, and never for a moment did anyone treat him otherwise than as an equal.

Despite the hardships and discomforts of the life, Washington enjoyed it keenly. The silence and the beauty of the vast, uninhabited regions through which he worked, the struggling little settlements of German emigrants upon which he occasionally stumbled, the constantly changing scene, the difficulties, dangers, and incidents of each day, interested him intensely, and the knowledge that he was

proving his ability to make an independent living added zest to his enjoyment. Thus at the end of four weeks, when the survey was completed, it was no longer an untried boy who journeyed back over the mountains, but a man who had done his share of a man's work and had shown that he could be trusted to make his way in the world.

CHAPTER V

EARNING A LIVING

From the moment Washington handed his report to his employer, his career as a surveyor was assured, for Lord Fairfax was so well pleased with his work that the next year he helped him procure a license conferring authority upon his surveys, and practically started him in business. Thus, at seventeen, Washington was supporting himself, earning from seven dollars a day upward, whenever the weather permitted him to work, and he was often kept so steadily employed that for weeks at a time he never slept in a bed, but passed night after night rolled up in a bearskin under the open sky. Three years of this life not only made him as skilled a woodsman as ever trod the forests, but gave him a reputation as a surveyor which was second to none. Indeed, it is said that no error was ever found in any of his surveys, and that some of them

are still the authority for certain boundaries in Virginia. This was not due to any extraordinary ability on his part. It was simply the result of having learned to do one thing at a time in an orderly instead of a slipshod manner. It is merely another proof that genius is frequently nothing more or less than "a capacity for taking infinite pains."

But though he paid strict attention to his professional duties, Washington evidently did not intend to devote his life to surveying, for as he rode through the country day after day he looked about for good farm land, and whenever an opportunity presented itself he either invested his earnings in what he thought desirable property with the idea of some day becoming a planter, or noted its location with a view to its future purchase. In this way he soon became the owner of considerable property, and the judgment he displayed in selecting it showed that he was not only a keen observer, but a man of some imagination, for it required no little faith to perceive the possibilities of the wild lands of Virginia in those early years.

In the intervals of his work, the busy surveyor sometimes visited his friend, Lord Fair-

fax, who had built a hunting lodge on his estate in the Blue Ridge, but more frequently he returned to his brother Lawrence's house, where he took fencing lessons with Jacob Van Braam, a veteran of the Spanish campaign, and received some little military instruction from an officer named Adjutant Muse. With both of these men he was to have strange experiences before many years had passed, but it was with no very definite idea of becoming a soldier that he first placed himself under their instruction. It is highly probable, however, that Lawrence Washington, who was active in what was known as the Ohio Company, desired his young kinsman to adopt the profession of arms, for he plainly foresaw that there would soon be a clash between the French and English unless one or the other surrendered its claim to the land in which the Ohio Company was interested. Doubtless it was this belief and his own failing health that caused him to resign his own command in the Colonial army and secure the post of military inspector, with the rank of major and a salary of a hundred and fifty pounds a year for his young brother, then nineteen years of age. In any case it was this action which first brought

Washington in touch with military affairs in Virginia and largely determined his future career.

Shortly after this important event, Lawrence became alarmingly ill and Washington immediately dropped all business to accompany him to the Island of Barbadoes in the West Indies, where the doctors thought the climate might effect his cure. This was the first time the younger man had been out of Virginia, and the diary which he kept of his travels was neither egotistic nor sentimental, as many diaries are, but a brief memorandum showing that he saw all that was worth seeing and understood what he saw. The trip was unfortunate almost from the very start, for Lawrence's health did not improve and Washington soon contracted smallpox, from which he did not recover for several weeks, and of which he bore the marks all the rest of his life. Moreover, the return voyage was made in the wildest sort of weather, which well-nigh wrecked the ship and gave Washington an experience in seasickness and the perils of the deep which probably made him thankful that he had not been allowed to become a sailor.

EARNING A LIVING

A few months after his return to Mount Vernon, Lawrence died, leaving Washington as the guardian of his daughter and intrusting all his property and affairs to his care. Under these circumstances it was no longer possible for the young surveyor to continue his chosen career, but he at once accepted the responsibility which had been thrust upon him and set to work at the management of his brother's plantation, at the same time helping his mother in the management of hers. All this imposed a heavy burden on a boy not yet twenty-one, and it is not at all surprising that he soon appeared a good deal older than his years. Certainly he must have made an unusual impression on the then Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, for in his twenty-second year that official selected him for an important and dangerous mission which was destined to change the entire course of his life.

CHAPTER VI

A DANGEROUS MISSION

WASHINGTON'S brother had good reason for expecting that England and France would soon be at war, for both countries claimed the same lands on the Ohio River and each was sending settlers there and trying to prevent the other from trading with the Indians. Indeed, it was to secure this profitable business that Lawrence Washington, Governor Dinwiddie, and others had formed the Ohio Company, and obtained permission from the English Government to take possession of the region in dispute and establish trading posts. The French, however, had no intention of allowing them to do anything of the sort, and they promptly sent soldiers from Canada to build a fort on the Ohio River and drive the English settlers away. All this was done so quietly that for a time no one in Virginia knew exactly what was happening, but when

rumors began to be heard that the Frenchmen had not only seized the lands, but were trying to persuade the Indians to help them against the English, Governor Dinwiddie sent an officer to find out where the fort was being erected and to demand an explanation from the French authorities. The man to whom this duty was intrusted, however, speedily returned, reporting that he had not got within miles of the fort, but had heard such terrifying stories of what the French and their Indian allies would do to any Englishman found in that part of the country, that he had hastened back to Virginia with all possible speed.

There was nothing for the Governor to do, therefore, but dismiss this cautious gentleman and appoint some less timid person in his place. It was by no means easy, however, to discover just the right man, for winter was almost at hand, and only a trained woodsman could find his way through the forests at that time of year. Moreover, it was necessary that the messenger should understand something of military matters, be able to write a correct report of all he saw and did, and know how to make friends with the Indians. Finally, some one recommended that the young Major who

had recently been appointed one of the four Adjutant Generals of Virginia be given a chance to win his spurs, and the Governor promptly acted upon the suggestion. He not only knew Washington in his official capacity, but had met him through his brother Lawrence and the Fairfaxes, and what he had learned of his qualities probably made him sure that the work could be safely intrusted to his hands. Accordingly, late in October, 1753, he gave the young officer a letter addressed to the Commandant of the French forces on the Ohio, with instructions to deliver it and return with an answer at the earliest possible moment, taking care to let the Indians understand that the English were their friends.

Washington had had little or no military experience up to this time, but he realized that the first duty of a soldier is prompt obedience, and the very day he received his orders he began making ready for his perilous task. He knew far too much about traveling in the wilderness, however, to rush in without careful preparations, and almost the first thing he did was to engage his old fencing master, Jacob Van Braam, and Christopher Gist, one

of the best guides in Virginia, to accompany him on the trip. With the assistance of these men he then proceeded to collect a good supply of horses, guns, ammunition, and provisions, and selected four experienced woodsmen to take care of the animals and baggage and act as servants. All this occupied many days, and before the party fairly started on their journey the ground was covered with deep snow and the streams had become far too high to cross without risking their packs. It was necessary, therefore, to divide the party, some of them taking the horses by roundabout trails which avoided the rivers, while others sailed down them in a canoe, and it was only after a week of the hardest sort of work that the travelers reached the Ohio. Even then they were still far from the French fort, but it was at this point that the first messenger had been frightened into beating a retreat, and Washington was fully aware of the perils which confronted him. He knew that the surrounding country was almost entirely inhabited by Indians, and if it should be true that the French had succeeded in persuading them to take up the hatchet against the English, there was every reason to believe that

they would make short work of him and his little party. It was now, however, that his experience with the red men began to prove of use, for he immediately sought out Shingiss, one of the most dangerous of the Delaware chiefs in the neighborhood, and paid him a visit of ceremony, at the same time inviting him to a council of chiefs to be held within a few days at Logstown. A man with less knowledge of the Indians might have treated them as mere painted savages, but Washington knew that their leaders were men of great dignity and considerable intelligence, who would have to be approached with marked respect and politeness, if he was to win them to his side. With this idea he sought the advice of John Davison, one of his party, who spoke several Indian languages, and through him he communicated with a number of the sachems or chiefs of the tribes known as the Six Nations, among whom was the powerful Seneca chief called the Half King. This important personage was, however, absent at his hunting cabin, and a runner was sent after him to inform him of Washington's arrival and of his wish to speak with him.

In the meantime the young officer learned

all he could of the existing situation from some French deserters who came into his camp, and after noting their stories in a memorandum book, he called upon the Half King and invited him to a private conference, where he learned that the French Commandant had threatened to make war on the Indians if they did not side with his countrymen. Thereupon Washington called all the chiefs together and made a friendly speech, telling them that he had come to let them know that the English would protect them, and ended by asking their assistance in reaching the French fort that he might deliver a message to its Commandant. All this was translated to the red men and accompanied by gifts consisting of belts of wampum, according to the Indian custom, which pleased the chiefs, and addressing him by the Indian name "Conotocarius," the Half King promised Washington to side with the English against the French and to give him a guard of honor to accompany him on his mission to the fort. For the moment it must have surprised Washington to hear himself called "Conotocarius," which means "the devourer of villages," but the Indians, whose memory was

extraordinary, probably associated his name with that of an ancestor of his, Colonel John Washington, who, nearly a hundred years before, had headed an expedition against the Susquehannocks and burned several of their villages.

It was some days, however, before a start could be made, for the Half King insisted upon a great many ceremonies, and Washington was obliged to wait for fear of offending him. Finally, he was permitted to proceed, accompanied by the Half King and two other chiefs called Jeskakake and White Thunder, and after traveling seventy miles in bad weather the party arrived at the first French outpost which was found to be in charge of a captain.

Here the Virginians were received with great politeness and invited to a supper where there was plenty to eat and more to drink, all of which was very agreeable after their weeks of rough living in the woods. But Washington had not taken his hard trip into the wilderness merely to enjoy himself, and he ate and drank very moderately, quietly noting what his hosts said when the wine set them to boasting, and keeping his own head clear for

the work that lay before him. His Indian companions, however, were not so wise and he soon discovered that the Frenchmen were trying to win them from him by supplying them with liquor and telling them that the French and not the English were their true friends. Nevertheless, he managed to persuade them to resume their journey after a long delay, and finally arrived at the fort, where he delivered his letter and received one in reply.

Then followed another hard struggle for the friendship of the Half King and the other chiefs, and so lavishly did the French entertain the red men that for a time it seemed as though the young Virginian would not be able to hold them to their promises. Still they accompanied him when he started on his return journey, but when they again reached the French outpost nothing could persuade them to go farther. Washington, therefore, took leave of them and pushed resolutely homeward, but his pack horses soon grew weak, and before they had proceeded far part of the baggage had to be carried on the riding horses, and even then the cavalcade could proceed only at a snail's pace through the heavy drifts of freezing snow.

Finally, Washington determined to make the rest of the journey on foot and, equipping himself in Indian dress and shouldering a knapsack and gun, he started off through the forest with Mr. Gist, little suspecting the dangers which lurked in his path.

CHAPTER VII

ADVENTURES IN A WILDERNESS

It was the day after Christmas when Washington and his companion plunged into the forest, and the snow, which had brought the horses to a practical standstill, rendered rapid traveling impossible. Moreover, each man was encumbered by a heavy knapsack and a gun, and neither had had much experience with snowshoes. Nevertheless, they managed to cover eighteen miles the first day and found lodging for the night at an Indian cabin. By this time Washington was footsore and weary, but early the next morning Mr. Gist and he pushed on again until they reached an Indian village known as Murdering Town, probably because of some massacre which had occurred there in former years.

Here they met a party of French Indians, one of whom pretended to know Mr. Gist, called him by his Indian name, questioned him

as to where he had come from and where he was going, and finally agreed to accompany the travelers and guide them to the nearest trail. Gist was extremely suspicious of this mysterious redskin, but as Washington wished to take the shortest possible route, it seemed best to accept his assistance, and the three started into the woods together, the Indian carrying Washington's pack.

For eight or ten miles they traveled rapidly, but the white men soon began to think their guide was leading them astray, and when they proposed a halt he grew surly, declaring that they would be scalped if they stayed the night where they were, as hostile Indians were lurking in the woods. Doubtful as they were of the redskin's honesty, the two Virginians followed him a little farther and then stopped again, but the Indian tried to lure them onward by claiming they were so close to his cabin that the report of a gun could be heard from there. Once more the travelers advanced, but by this time their suspicions were thoroughly aroused and they soon refused to proceed another step, although the Indian protested that his hut was then so near that two whoops could be heard there. While

they were still deliberating what to do, however, the pretended guide suddenly raised his gun, fired point-blank at them, and seeing that he had missed his aim, fled to the shelter of a tree, where he attempted to reload his weapon, but before he succeeded, his intended victims sprang upon him, and had Washington not interfered, Gist would have killed him on the spot.

What to do with the fellow was a serious question, but it was at last decided to let him go, with the idea that he would make straight for the ambush where his friends were probably waiting. Gist, therefore, pretended to believe that he had fired the gun as a signal and directed him to find his cabin and bring back some food, but the moment he disappeared in the forest, the travelers started in the opposite direction, and by desperate work managed to keep moving during the whole night. This gave them a good start, but both men realized that they would not be out of danger until they had water between them and their pursuers, so they made but few halts the next day, and dared not light a fire for fear the smoke would put the Indians on their trail. At last they reached the Alleghany River, but

it was too deep to ford, and their only chance of crossing it was to build a raft. With desperate haste, therefore, they set to work, and despite the fact that they had only one hatchet, they succeeded in cutting down a few trees, and binding them together, clambered aboard the logs and pushed out from the shore.

The stream was swift and deep and filled with floating ice, and in trying to steady the clumsy craft with a pole, Washington was jerked overboard into about ten feet of freezing water, and he would have been drowned had he not clung to one of the raft logs. This was not the end of their troubles, however, for the raft was now in midstream, and do what they could, the men were unable to drive it to either shore. Finally, it drifted near an island, which they managed to reach, and there they remained until the next morning, when the river was sufficiently frozen to allow them to cross it on the ice. By this time all Mr. Gist's fingers had been frozen and some of his toes, and it was with great difficulty that the travelers forced their way through the woods to an Indian trader's cabin, where they received shelter and refreshment. There they learned that a band of Ottawa Indians had

recently killed and scalped a party of seven men and women, and congratulating themselves on their escape, they concluded to procure horses before again venturing into the forests.

In the meantime Washington heard that the Queen of one of the neighboring Indian tribes had been offended because he had failed to visit her on his outward journey, and mindful of his instructions to make friends with the savages whenever it was possible to do so, he sought her out and gave her a match coat and a bottle of rum, which latter gift, he noted in his diary, she thought much the better present of the two. Finally, the horses arrived and the travelers at once mounted and resumed their journey, Gist stopping at his home and Washington pressing steadily forward day after day, in the face of the worst possible weather, but making such slow progress, despite his best endeavors, that almost two weeks elapsed before he arrived at Colonel Fairfax's residence.

One day's rest, however, served to put him in good condition and he immediately proceeded to Williamsburg, where he arrived at the end of four days and delivered the French

Commandant's letter to the Governor. This letter was practically a defiance of the English Government, and realizing that it meant war, Governor Dinwiddie directed the young officer to make a written report of all he had seen and heard, and to have it ready within twenty-four hours. A less careful man might perhaps have been unable to respond to this sudden demand, but Washington's habit of keeping a diary now stood him in good stead and he straightway wrote a modest account of his adventures, with such accurate and detailed information concerning the French fort and its garrison, the Indians, and the surrounding country, that it was printed and published as a governmental record. Indeed, all who read the document agreed that it was a remarkable performance for a man not yet twenty-two years of age, and within three months its author was made a Lieutenant Colonel.

CHAPTER VIII

BAPTISM OF FIRE

War had not yet been declared, but before he obtained his promotion Washington received orders to enlist a body of recruits and prepare them for active service in the field. He accordingly proceeded to enroll and equip as many men as possible, but he knew very little more about military matters than the privates under his command, and all the delays and difficulties in procuring the necessary supplies sorely tried his patience. For a time, indeed, it seemed as though his hasty temper would prove a serious obstacle to his career, for he fretted and fumed over every petty annoyance, and it was with the greatest difficulty that he learned the value of calmness and the art of making the best of things. Meanwhile, he received his commission as Lieutenant Colonel of a regiment commanded by Colonel Fry, with orders to march at once with his raw recruits to the relief of Captain Trent,

who had been sent to erect a fort on the Ohio, and on April 2, 1754, he again started into the wilderness at the head of about a hundred and fifty men. Once more his fencing master, Van Braam, accompanied him, this time as a lieutenant, but before the campaign ended he had good reason to regret that he had not left this old friend at home.

Indeed, the whole expedition was unfortunate from the very start, for Captain Trent, who had been intrusted with the building of the fort, was the same timid messenger who had been frightened away from the Ohio only a few months earlier, and before the relief expedition could reach him, the French captured his fort while he was absent from his post, and his men scampered toward home as fast as their legs could carry them. When this news reached him, Washington would have been fully justified in retreating with his handful of men, or in waiting where he was for further orders, but he regarded the attack on the fort as a declaration of war and decided to push forward and at least prepare the way for Colonel Fry and the rest of the regiment. This was, of course, an extremely rash proceeding, for the French were known to have

almost a thousand soldiers and Indians at their command, and the entire Virginian force numbered less than two hundred inexperienced militia. But their commander longed for an opportunity to distinguish himself and was confident that he could retreat in time if the enemy attacked in too great force to be resisted. Accordingly, he informed Governor Dinwiddie of his intention to advance, and used every effort to induce the Half King and other chiefs of the Six Nations to come to his support. The Indians, however, moved very slowly, and so much time was wasted in collecting the necessary provisions and supplies for the little army, and so much dissatisfaction was felt concerning the officers' pay, that the ardent young Lieutenant Colonel worked himself into a perfect fever of indignation. Meanwhile, however, the Governor approved his plan of action, and encouraged by this and the prospects of being reënforced by some of his Indian friends, he pushed on to a place known as Great Meadows, which he thought "a charming field for an encounter." Here he built intrenchments, but when the Half King and some of the other chiefs arrived they brought only a handful of warriors with

them, and there was every indication that the French were rapidly advancing in overwhelming numbers. By this time the campaign had lasted almost two months without a shot being fired on either side, and when on the night of May 27, 1754, news was received that a party of Frenchmen had at last been seen only a few miles from his camp, Washington hurried forward at the head of forty men with the idea of surprising and capturing them.

The night was as black as pitch when the young commander and his company started into the forest and a heavy rain was falling, making it almost impossible to keep the blind trail they were endeavoring to follow. Again and again they lost it and tumbled over one another in groping their way through the darkness, but by sunrise they made a juncture with the Half King and a few other Indians, and before long their scouts located the French camp. Washington thereupon directed the Indians to advance on the left, while he closed in on the enemy from the right, and pushing forward at the head of his men, suddenly came upon the French, who instantly sprang to their arms and opened a brisk fire. In fifteen minutes ten of them were

killed, one was wounded, twenty-one were captured, and only one escaped. Among those killed was the commander, Jumonville, and when the news of his death reached the French, they denounced it as a murder, on the ground that he was merely a peaceful ambassador, although the papers found in his possession, and other facts, indicated that he was commanding an armed scouting party. Washington sent his prisoners to Virginia, and, flushed with his little victory, foolishly wrote home that he had heard the bullets whistling, and that there was something charming in the sound, at the same time flattering himself that he would have no trouble in holding his own against the French. But before long he learned that overconfidence is almost always fatal to success—a lesson he never forgot.

During all this time Colonel Fry, the commander of the regiment, had remained some little distance from the scene, and within a few days after the opening engagement he died, leaving Washington to his own resources, with very litle hope of being strongly reënforced and every prospect of being attacked by the main body of the enemy. Nevertheless, the young commander actually moved for-

ward, and in spite of the fact that his provisions were low and the Indians far from enthusiastic, he held his position until warned that an overwhelming French force was approaching to avenge what they called the "murder of Jumonville." Then he fell back upon the Great Meadows, where he hastily erected a shelter which he called "Fort Necessity," but the enemy was already at his heels, and his famished men had scarcely recovered from their exhausting retreat before their pursuers opened fire and received an answering volley. For a whole day skirmishing continued, but by this time all Washington's Indian allies had disappeared, Major Muse, his old military instructor, began to show the white feather, and the half-starved men were in no condition to defend themselves against the superior forces opposed to them. He, therefore, gladly welcomed the flag of truce which the French sent out, and accepted their proposition to retire from the fort with all the honors of war.

The terms of surrender were in French, and as Washington could not read that language, he was obliged to rely on his old fencing teacher, Van Braam, to translate them for

him, and the veteran swordsman made a sorry mess of this, for the document was so worded as to make it appear that the English admitted that Jumonville had been murdered, whereas Van Braam thought it merely stated that he had been killed. Blissfully ignorant of this trick, Washington started homeward the next morning with his flags flying and drums beating, but the French Indians threatened his men on their march, stole their horses, and destroyed their baggage, and it was a miserable and exhausted party that at last reached Virginia. Here, however, no one blamed them for their defeat, and the government, exonerating Washington for the error in the terms of surrender, gave a vote of thanks to him and his officers, except Major Muse, for the courage with which they had stuck to their posts without support for more than three months. Nevertheless, the young commander was not deceived by this generous treatment and refused to pose as a hero. He knew that he had been rash to the point of folly, and had been guilty of some rather childish boasting, but before another year had passed he had an opportunity of showing what he had learned from humiliation and defeat.

CHAPTER IX

THE BATTLE OF MONONGAHELA

Up to this time the campaign against the French had been conducted entirely by the colonies, but now the British Government decided to assume control of the war, and several regiments were sent from England to Virginia. At the very outset, however, the authorities made a serious blunder, for they issued an order that the British should outrank the Virginian officers on all occasions, and when Washington discovered that this practically placed him under the orders of men of a lower grade he immediately resigned and retired to his farm at Mount Vernon. Nevertheless, he was eager to see further service in the field, and when General Braddock, the British commander, offered to make him one of his staff officers, with the rank of Colonel, and allow him to serve as a volunteer, he promptly accepted the invitation.

General Braddock was an experienced soldier, with a good, if not a great, military reputation, but he was entirely ignorant of the country in which his campaign would have to be fought and he had a supreme contempt for the Virginian and all other provincial troops. He had heard enough of Washington, however, to think that his experience might be useful, and for this reason he made it possible for him to join the army without loss of rank or dignity. The Virginian Colonel was then a powerfully built young fellow of about twenty-three, over six feet tall, with a grave but pleasant face, rather shy and awkward in the presence of women, but entirely at his ease in the company of men, and filled with enthusiasm for military life. A different type of man might easily have been regarded as an intruder by the British officers, but they soon discovered that he never talked about what he had seen or done, but was exceedingly anxious to learn everything they could teach him, and before long he was a favorite in the mess-room, and as nearly in the confidence of the General as any member of his staff. Hitherto, the only soldiers he had commanded had been backwoodsmen, clad in every sort of costume,

with little or no idea of drill or discipline, and the sight of the British regulars, with their smart uniforms and precise military movements, filled him with admiration as he watched them on parade. Indeed, for a while, he fully shared General Braddock's opinion that neither the French nor the Indians could long stand against such a splendid veteran force, and his faith in the troops was only equaled by his confidence in their commander.

The moment the campaign actually opened, however, the new staff officer was far less favorably impressed. General Braddock had his own ideas of advancing into the wilderness, and the route he was persuaded to adopt, and the order of march he prescribed, showed an alarming ignorance of what lay before him, and a foolish disregard of the best advice. Nevertheless, Washington watched the army depart with more amusement than dismay, thinking that the road which had been chosen for it and the absurd amount of its baggage would, at the worst, merely delay and hamper its movements, and that such mistakes would correct themselves. In the meantime, he remained in Virginia to settle some of his business affairs, and then started to overtake the

General. Being a volunteer, he had to supply his own horses and equipment, but no officer was better mounted or more neatly uniformed than he when he set out on his journey, for even as a boy he had always shown a proper regard for his appearance, and Braddock had every reason to be proud of the young Aide-de-Camp who joined him in Maryland.

By this time the General was fully aware of the folly of the route he had taken, but he had apparently not benefited by the lesson, for he was still unwilling to leave his ponderous baggage behind him, so for weeks the army made but little progress. Washington respectfully informed him that it would be impossible to drag the heavy artillery and lumbering baggage trains through the mountain wilderness, but Braddock merely grew impatient, complaining that the colonists were not giving him proper assistance and roundly abusing the whole country. He had always found proper roads prepared for his forces in Europe, and had always carried the amount of baggage he had brought with him on this expedition, and to his mind there was no other way of marching. Washington protested and argued more and more warmly as time went

on, but no attention was paid to his advice, and, as he expressed it, the army halted " to level every molehill and to erect bridges over every brook," until it advanced scarcely more than three miles a day, and sickness began to break out among the troops. Meanwhile, he himself fell ill and had to be left behind, and for some weeks he despaired of recovery in time to take part in the battle with the French. Finally, however, he persuaded the surgeon to allow him to start on again in a wagon, and after a painful journey he rejoined the General near the Monongahela River.

The Monongahela was a stream fordable at a point some eight miles from Fort Duquesne, the stronghold of the French, and on July 9, 1755, at the moment of Washington's arrival on the scene, Braddock was preparing to push his troops through the ford and attempt to carry the fortress by assault. This was the event in which the young Virginian had longed to participate, and though he was still far from well he instantly mounted a horse and reported himself ready for duty in the field. The General had by this time partially adopted the advice of his volunteer Aide, for he had abandoned his heaviest artillery and

baggage and divided his forces, his advance party consisting of a small body of Virginian troops and more than a thousand regulars, but such was his contempt for the enemy, that although he had been warned to beware of Indian ambuscades, he ordered the troops to cross the stream without throwing out skirmishers or making any search of the woods which lay just beyond the landing place on the farther shore. Fully alive to the danger of this proceeding, Washington strongly advised some such measure of precaution, and the same warning had already been given by no less a person than Benjamin Franklin, but Braddock's only reply was to assure him that disciplined British regulars had no need to fear the maneuvers or tricks of savages.

The boast seemed almost justified, for as the veteran troops swept forward in their brilliant uniforms, with all the order and precision of a regiment on review, they looked invincible, and the straggling company of Virginians in their not too clean hunting costumes made a sorry showing by comparison. On the other side of the river stretched a wide clearing fringed with forest-covered hills, and across this natural parade ground swung the bright

array, their arms glittering, their flags flying, and their drummers gayly beating a tattoo. It was a spectacle to stir even the most sluggish blood, but as Washington followed it with admiring gaze a loud cry suddenly rent the air, the crack of a rifle followed, and instantly from the thickly wooded heights a storm of bullets struck the well-ordered ranks, while on all sides the air resounded with the yells of hidden marksmen and the woods flashed and smoked with the discharge of their deadly weapons.

No bush fighter of Virginia needed to be told the meaning of those sounds. The troops had marched into the deadliest sort of ambush, and those who understood what had happened knew that unless they were speedily extricated not a man of them would be left alive to tell the tale. Already scores of victims lay dead upon the field, and those that survived were huddling together in panic-stricken confusion. At the first volley the Virginians instantly spread out, each man taking cover behind a tree, after the Indian method of fighting, and Washington, dashing toward the dazed and helpless masses, vainly besought Braddock and his fellow-officers to shelter their men in

the same manner. But no English forces had ever been handled in such fashion, and hiding behind trees seemed to Braddock like cowardice in the presence of the enemy. He, therefore, actually ordered the standard-bearers to advance the colors and plant them in the ground as rallying points for his fast-disappearing forces, and there he re-formed them into solid shoulder-to-shoulder ranks, where they made perfect targets for the enemy and did far more damage to their friends than their foes by firing blind volleys at every puff of smoke.

Aghast as he was at this fatal stupidity, Washington made desperate efforts to save the day by bringing the artillery into action, even helping to serve one of the guns himself, but long before a crisis was reached the veterans were seized with wild panic and streamed away in headlong flight, some of them cutting the artillery horses from their traces and galloping away in abject terror. All that personal bravery and example could do to check this disgraceful stampede the English officers did, no less than sixty falling in vain attempts to rally their men, and among the survivors were Horatio Gates and Thomas

Gage, two officers who were destined to be well known in future years. Washington himself displayed such reckless daring that the Indians, firing at him again and again, are said to have believed that he bore a charmed life. Twice his horse was shot from under him and four bullets passed through his clothing, but he remained unharmed, and when Braddock fell, mortally wounded, and only a few officers remained alive, he assumed command and with the Virginians covered the fugitives' retreat. It was no easy task, however, to escape with even a handful of men, for the French realized the opportunity that lay before them and shot down every straggler, while the Indians, emerging from the forest with yells of triumph, scalped the wounded and plundered the dead. Indeed, if the enemy had not stopped to seize the cannon and other trophies of victory, it is extremely doubtful if even a remnant of the troops would have escaped, but as it was, by hard riding Washington managed to reach the rear division of the army and bring it up to the support of the disorganized fugitives. The commander of this relieving force then assumed charge, but he had been so thoroughly

frightened by what he had seen and heard that he ordered the retreat to continue, and the whole army fell back as rapidly as possible toward Fort Cumberland, sixty miles away.

In the meantime, Braddock died of his wounds and the regimental Chaplain having fallen in the battle, Washington read the burial service at his commander's grave, over which the troops and artillery were marched to conceal all trace of it from the enemy and their savage allies.

CHAPTER X

THE COMMANDER OF VIRGINIA'S ARMY

HUMILIATING as such a defeat would have been under any circumstances, it became absolutely shameful when the news arrived that the French and Indians at the Monongahela ambush had not numbered, all together, over seven hundred men—scarcely half the force under Braddock—and that they had stumbled quite unexpectedly on their opponents and had never hoped to do more than delay their advance. In the face of this disclosure the rout of the whole British army and the abandonment of the entire campaign set all Europe laughing, and in Virginia, as well as in the other colonies, the survivors of the expedition were treated with anything but respect.

Of course, most of the blame fell upon poor General Braddock, but his personal bravery was unquestioned, which was more than could be said for the veterans of the rear division,

who had scampered away without waiting to see if anybody was pursuing them. In fact, the only persons connected with the affair whose reputation did not suffer were Washington and the little company of Virginians, whose courage and coolness had virtually saved the army from utter destruction. Washington was especially praised for his conduct, a regimental chaplain referring to him in a sermon at that time as "that heroic youth whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so singular a manner for some important service to his country," and about a month after the battle he was offered the command of all the Virginian forces.

This was unquestionably a high honor for a man not yet twenty-four years old, but Washington was by no means eager to reënter the service, preferring to remain at Mount Vernon and resume work on his plantations. In the first place, he did not feel that he knew enough about military matters to take the chief command, and in the second place, his mother was extremely unwilling that he should again risk his life in the wilderness, while he himself felt that he had lost far more than he had gained

in the previous expeditions. Nevertheless, when he was convinced that the people of Virginia really needed him and that he would receive sufficient authority to raise an effective force, he accepted the appointment and at once set to work at his duties.

A more discouraging task than that of organizing an army from the raw materials with which he was supplied can scarcely be imagined, and from the very outset he met with annoyances and delays of every kind. Both patriotism and money were lacking, and despite his best efforts, he never had sufficient men to guard the frontier or protect the settlers who were being continually attacked by the Indians. Nevertheless, he managed, by strict discipline and untiring work, to maintain some sort of fighting force for six months and to keep the enemy in check by constant skirmishing. Then an English captain commanding a handful of men appeared on the scene and claimed to be his superior officer, on the ground that he held, or had once held, a commission from the King. To this Washington would not submit, and he at once obtained leave of absence to visit Boston and have General Shirley, who had been appointed Com-

mander-in-Chief after Braddock's death, settle the dispute.

Accordingly, he started out on horseback, accompanied by two officers and two servants, and a gallant appearance the little company must have made, for, being on an official mission, Washington wore his dress uniform of blue and red, with a white-and-scarlet cloak and a sword knot of silver and blue, while his Aides were similarly attired, and the servants wore white-and-scarlet liveries and hats trimmed with silver lace. This was the first time he had ever been north of Philadelphia, but not only in that city but in New York, New London, Providence, and Boston, his record as a soldier was known and he received enough flattering attentions to have turned a far older head. He was not, however, in the least spoiled, and after enjoying all the dinners and dances and entertainments to which he was invited, and securing his right of command over the officious captain, he rode back to Virginia, and resumed his duties with fresh energy.

Almost two years of vexatious work followed, but in that time he received the most invaluable lessons of his career. For a while

his temper and his tongue continued to get the better of him, and the stupidity and neglect of the government officials and others with whom he had to work frequently roused him to great outbursts of wrath. But little by little he learned that anger and impatience rarely accomplish anything and that he would never be fitted to command others if he could not control himself. Even by the end of the campaign he had not acquired calmness and patience, but during this time he gradually realized that the less quarrels and disputes he had, the more work he accomplished and that every loss of temper meant a loss of time. Moreover, he fully recognized the truth of the saying that it is a poor workman who is always finding fault with his tools, and instead of complaining of his difficulties and seeking excuses, he acquired the habit of making one thing serve when he could not get another. All this was a hard, wearing experience, however, and late in 1757 he became so ill that he was obliged to retire to Mount Vernon for several months without attempting to resume active service.

Meanwhile, General Forbes, another British officer, was given supreme command of all

the colonial and regular forces in the local field, and Washington once more started for the scene of action. He soon found, however, that although the lesson of Braddock's defeat had not been lost upon the new General, the campaign, as a whole, was miserably handled. Indeed, the second march against Fort Duquesne was not much more than well under way before another force of British and provincial troops was ambushed and shot to pieces, and had it not been for a decisive defeat of the French in Canada, which occurred about this time, it is highly probable that the entire expedition would have ended in failure. As it was, however, the enemy finally set fire to the fort and abandoned it, and Washington, leading the foremost troops, took possession of it on November 25, 1758, without a struggle. With the raising of the English colors on its smoking ruins Fort Duquesne was rechristened Fort Pitt, in honor of the great English statesman, and from this historic fortress sprang the present city of Pittsburg.

Thus ended a campaign which had practically lasted for four years, during which Washington had developed from a daring officer into a well-disciplined commander. He

had learned much from the professional soldiers of England with whom he had been thrown in contact, but perhaps the most important thing was the knowledge that they were not invincible, as he had formerly supposed, and that the colonial troops fighting in their own country were a match for any men. Little did he then dream how useful this knowledge was to prove to him during the coming years.

CHAPTER XI

PLANTATION DAYS

SHORTLY before the campaign against Fort Duquesne began, Washington had occasion to travel to the seat of government at Williamsburg, and on the road he fell in with a friend who persuaded him to stop for dinner at his house. There he met Mrs. Martha Custis, a young widow, with whom he fell in love at first sight, and within a few days they were engaged. Six months later they were married, the wedding occurring on January 6, 1759, in the presence of a small but distinguished company, for Washington, although not yet twenty-seven, had become a person of no little importance in the colony through his command of its army. Among the guests were the Governor of Virginia, resplendent in his official costume of scarlet and gold; English and colonial officers in their dress uniforms, and ladies in picturesque gowns, making as

brilliant a scene as was ever witnessed in Virginia. The bride was becomingly attired in white silk, shot with threads of silver, and Washington wore a costume of blue and silver, trimmed with scarlet; his knee and shoe buckles were of gold, and at his side he carried a light dress sword. After the ceremony, which occurred at what was known as "the White House," the bride drove off in a coach and six, with Washington riding beside her carriage on one of his favorite horses, attended by a cavalcade of officers and other gentlemen of the wedding party, who accompanied him and his lady several miles across country to Mrs. Washington's residence in Williamsburg.

Here the newly married couple lived for several months, in order that Washington might attend the meetings of the burgesses. The burgesses were men selected from the various counties of Virginia to make the laws for the colony, and Washington had been elected as one of these lawmakers during his last campaign. Indeed, he made his first appearance in the House of Burgesses, as their place of meeting was called, shortly after his marriage, and was much embarrassed to find

himself welcomed with an address, thanking him in the name of Virginia for his services during the war. Astonished by this public praise, he rose to reply, but no words came to him and he stood blushing with confusion until the speaker gracefully came to his rescue: "Sit down, Mr. Washington," he remarked; "your modesty equals your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language I possess."

As soon as his official duties permitted, Washington set out for Mount Vernon, where he and his wife intended to make their home, and here he was soon busily engaged. Mount Vernon had not changed much since he had come to know and love it as a boy. The cozy farmhouse, erected by his father and improved by his brother Lawrence, still stood on the hillside above the Potomac River on which he had fished and rowed and sailed; the well-known woods, with their splendid trees, still fringed the fields, reminding him of his boyhood haunts and rambles; and the barns and pastures, where he had made friends with the horses and learned to ride, remained much the same. In fact, the whole place welcomed him back with familiar arms, and for the first time

in many years he once more felt himself at home. It was to no life of idleness or luxury, however, that he returned, for he was ambitious to succeed as a farmer, and to make Mount Vernon the model plantation of Virginia. With this purpose he began studying the best methods of raising crops, and planning for new and more convenient buildings, with the result that a carpenter's shop, a blacksmith's forge, a flour mill, a spinning house, and sheds for curing and packing tobacco were soon erected, and much that was used on the farm, from clothes to plows, was made directly on the place.

All this required hard work, and Washington superintended almost every detail himself, even fashioning new implements for the fields with his own hands and keeping all his own acounts, besides visiting his slaves and personally looking to their welfare in time of illness or other need. Moreover, Mount Vernon was not the only property which demanded his attention, for Mrs. Washington and his stepchildren, Jack and Patsey Custis, had lands which were intrusted to his care, and on them he bestowed the same intelligent thought. Altogether, he had more to do than

most men could possibly have accomplished, and it was at this period that the methodical and orderly habits he had acquired as a boy proved invaluable. Instead of being worried and hurried by his various duties, he performed them all very calmly and systematically, doing one thing at a time and arranging his hours of work so that he never wasted any time and always had plenty to spare. Of course, he liked and took pride in his work, or he would not have done it so well, but he enjoyed every kind of healthy sport just as much as he had ever done, and each day he managed to find some opportunity for his favorite pastimes.

Always a lover of riding, he had many fine horses in his stables, of which his favorites were "Magnolia," an Arabian thoroughbred, and "Ajax," and "Valiant," while in his kennels were the hounds, "Sweetlips," "Chanter," "Mopsey," "Music," "Sancho," "Singer," "Forester," "Busy," "Ragman," "Tartar," the water dog, "Pilot," and other four-footed friends. Indeed, during the season the fox hunters met three time a week, sometimes at the Fairfaxes', but quite as often at Mount Vernon, for the woods about it were

famous as coverts, and there was nowhere in Virginia a better pack of hounds. Indeed, a more perfect spot for a meet it would be difficult to imagine—the splendid woods, the comfortable farmhouse, the wide sweep of turf, the silent, shining river, the magnificent view, all combining to make an ideal setting for the gentlemen in blue and pink, with their spirited horses and their well-trained dogs. Washington usually wore a blue coat, scarlet waistcoat, buckskin breeches, and a velvet cap on these occasions, and he was generally accompanied by General Braddock's old orderly, Bishop, somewhat similarly attired and carrying a French horn for calling the dogs. Fox hunting was not, however, Washington's only diversion, for he was fond of fishing and shooting, but he had a positive disgust for men who slaughtered game merely for the sake of the killing, and loathed cruel and unsportsmanlike conduct of any kind. Billiards and card playing he likewise enjoyed, and busy as he was, he still found time to attend all the dinners, dances, and entertainments of the neighborhood, while his own house was famed for hospitality.

For six happy years he lived this active

but simple and healthy life, using his brains to make his land pay and gaining such a reputation for honesty and fair dealing that his brands of flour were passed without government inspection at home and foreign ports, and brought the highest prices on the market. It was also an unselfish life, for there were many people on his own plantation and among his neighbors who depended upon him for help, and his daily entries in the diary, which he kept during this whole period, show that he constantly thought and planned for others far more than he did for himself. To his public duties he was particularly attentive, seldom missing a meeting of the House of Burgesses and taking the keenest interest in all political questions.

Thus, on May 29, 1765, when one of the new members rose to address the House on the subject of the taxation of the colonies by England, he was an attentive listener. This new member was a young lawyer named Patrick Henry, and his speech, which boldly warned England not to tax the American colonies without their consent, lingered in Washington's memory long after he returned to the quiet of Mount Vernon.

CHAPTER XII

WAR CLOUDS

Virginians had for sometime past been openly expressing their resentment at the treatment they were receiving from the mother country, but Washington was not the sort of man who makes up his mind in a hurry. He saw that the King of England and his advisers were attempting a very foolish and a very dangerous thing in forcing the people of America to pay taxes without consulting their wishes, but he believed they would discover their mistake, and before long the Stamp Tax, which had aroused the fiercest opposition, was abandoned. For a while, therefore, it seemed as though there would be no further difficulty, but trouble soon broke out again when the English Government renewed its interference with Massachusetts and the other colonies, and from that time on the quarrel grew more serious every year.

Probably no one who saw Washington attending to his daily duties at Mount Vernon during this period imagined that he was particularly interested in the rights or wrongs of America. Apparently, he was absorbed in his fields, his horses, his dogs, and his friends, and the notes which he recorded from day to day in his diary refer almost entirely to happenings at his home. To-day " Mopsey " had eight puppies; yesterday Lord Fairfax dined and spent the night preparatory to fox hunting on the morrow; sowed wheat to-day at the mill; worked on the new road; planned for the gardens; finished the frame for the barn; anointed all the hounds (old dogs as well as puppies) with hogs' lard and brimstone for the mange; Patsey Custis ill yesterday—sent for the doctor; took Jacky Custis to his tutor's; played cards indoors to-day, as it was snowing; dined with guests at home.

So run the entries telling how and where Washington spent his time. They do not, however, tell his thoughts; they say little or nothing of himself or of his own opinions. Yet, in the House of Burgesses, where he rarely spoke, though he listened closely to all

that was being said; at his own table, where he and his guests often sat talking until late at night; in correspondence with his friends, and in the restful seclusion of his fields and woods, Washington was slowly making up his mind which side to take in the coming struggle, and when he had once decided, he never wavered for an instant. Thus, in 1769, when the Governor of Virginia closed the House of Burgesses and dismissed its members to their homes as a punishment for having protested against England's treatment of Massachusetts, it was Washington who addressed them at a neighboring house, and proposed that Virginia should immediately stop buying tea and certain other articles from England until she behaved fairly to Massachusetts. Some of the men who promised to do this did not keep their word, but from that hour Washington would never allow an ounce of tea in his house, or buy any of the forbidden merchandise. Nevertheless, he did not yet believe that it would be necessary for the colonies to fight for their rights, and he resumed his quiet life at Mount Vernon with no apparent fears for the future.

All this time his work was increasing enor-

mously, and before long he was managing not only his own plantations and those of his step-children, but also his mother's property and the estate of his brother Augustine, who had died, besides taking charge of the affairs of Colonel Fairfax and several other neighbors who had gone to England, or otherwise needed his assistance. Notwithstanding all these cares, he still found time to hunt and shoot and fish, to attend boat races, barbecues, dinners, and dances, and to revisit, and in a measure reëxplore the region of the Ohio where he had gained his first experience as a surveyor and a soldier.

It was in the midst of all these activities that unwelcome news disturbed the quiet of his life. The English Government, it appeared, was about to send troops to Boston and close its port, and the Virginian Burgesses at once protested so indignantly that they were again ordered to disperse. Before they did so, however, they resolved that June 1, 1774, the date appointed for closing the port of Boston, should be made an occasion of prayer and fasting in Virginia, and Washington's diary records that he attended church and fasted all that day. Two months later a

meeting was held to choose delegates to the first Continental Congress to be held at Philadelphia, and here Washington, usually silent on such occasions, spoke briefly, but to the point. "I will raise a thousand men, enlist them at my own expense, and march myself at their head for the relief of Boston," he volunteered.

The effect of such a statement from a man who rarely spoke and was known to be on friendly terms with the Governor and other royal officials made a profound sensation. "It was the most eloquent speech that was ever made," declared one of those who heard it, and many believed that it meant that the hour for fighting had arrived. The only immediate result, however, was the election of Washington, Patrick Henry, and five others to represent Virginia at the Philadelphian Congress, which contented itself with sending a masterly message to the King and the people of Great Britain, explaining the whole difficulty and respectfully demanding fair treatment for all the American colonies. Washington took no part in the long discussions which led to this action, but he carefully listened to all that was said, and returned to Vir-

ginia more thoroughly convinced than ever of the justice of the cause.

It was soon apparent that neither the King nor the Parliament would pay any attention to the Continental Congress, and Virginia and the other colonies reluctantly commenced preparing for war. Many of Washington's neighbors thought as he did, but not all of them, for Lord Fairfax and his family supported the King. Washington did not, however, quarrel with them on this account, and before many years had passed he was able to show that he had not forgotten their kindness to him in his boyhood days. In March, 1775, some of the Virginian troops began offering to put themselves under his command, among others a company raised by one of his brothers, and at the same time he was summoned to attend another convention to elect the delegates from Virginia to the second Continental Congress, which was to assemble at Philadelphia the following May, and again consult as to the best means of protecting the colonies. At this convention Patrick Henry made a great speech, calling upon all Americans to rise and fight for their independence. "Is life so dear or peace so sweet," he demanded,

" as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty—or give me death! "

It was in the city of Richmond that Washington listened to those thrilling words, but he needed no urging to take up the sword, and when he was again elected to represent Virginia at the Congress, he had already accepted the command of several independent military companies and expressed his full intention of devoting his life and fortune to the cause. Nevertheless, for the few weeks that intervened between the Richmond meeting and the opening of the second Continental Congress, he resumed his peaceful occupations at Mount Vernon, which, under his constant supervision, had become not only one of the most beautiful but also one of the most highly cultivated plantations in Virginia. There was no display about the place—nothing costly or magnificent, but the roads, the hedges of box, the old-fashioned flower gardens, the well-fenced fields, the trimmed paths, and all the buildings were in perfect condition, and no more homelike spot existed in the colony in the Spring of 1775.

Always famed for its hospitality, it welcomed a constant throng of visitors during April of that year, and among the many guests who then found a warm reception, were Charles Lee, an ambitious officer who had served in the English army, and Horatio Gates, one of the survivors of Braddock's disastrous campaign. Little did Washington imagine as he rode over his farm with those gentlemen, or sat chatting with them in the dining room, what experiences he was to have at their hands within the next few years. Others passed in and out of the hospitable mansion during those weeks with whom he was likewise to have business of vast importance, but his diary records merely the fact of their visits and nothing of their conversation or their hopes or fears. Perhaps they spoke only of the prospects of the crops and the beauty of the country under the touch of Spring.

On the morning of May 3, 1775, several negro servants might have been seen walking up and down before the simple farmhouse, each leading a saddle horse equipped for a long journey. One of them, a chestnut named "Nelson," with a white face and four white

feet, bore a saddle furnished with both saddle bags and pistol holsters, and when Washington, his wife, and other members of the household appeared at the doorway, the groom quickly led this favorite into place and held the stirrup while his master sprang lightly into the saddle. There were a few words of farewell, and then as Billy, his colored body servant, mounted " Blueskin," another of his favorite hunters, Washington started on his second journey to the Continental Congress at Philadelphia, never dreaming as he turned to salute the group on the doorstep that he was saying good-by to Mount Vernon, and that eight terrible years would intervene before it gladdened his eyes again.

CHAPTER XIII

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

Before the representatives from Virginia reached Philadelphia messengers came hurrying southward with tidings of the battle of Lexington, and when Washington appeared in the Continental Congress on May 10, 1775, it was observed that he wore his old blue-and-red uniform which he had worn as commander of the Virginian forces and laid aside sixteen years before. That was his method of expressing his opinion of the news.

But the other members of the Congress were not even then ready to believe that the war had actually begun, and for more than a month they tried to keep the peace between England and her colonies, in spite of Patrick Henry's angry protest that "there was no peace," and the fact that armed Americans were already surrounding Boston. Finally, however, it became absolutely necessary to se-

lect some one to command this force, and the discussions turned on the proper person to receive the appointment. Washington was, of course, the choice of Virginia, but John Hancock, of Massachusetts, and several others desired the position, and as the army around Boston was composed wholly of New England men, it was argued that they would be indignant if a stranger were placed over them. On the other hand, John Adams and some of the ablest delegates from Massachusetts saw that it would not do to offend the powerful colony of Virginia, especially as her candidate had more experience and reputation as a soldier than any of the others, and they urged that the other colonies yield to her wishes.

As soon as his name was mentioned in these discussions, Washington left the room, and on June 15, 1775, he was formally nominated and unanimously elected Commander-in-Chief of all the forces in the field. The following day he was notified of this fact and accepted the appointment in a few modest words, promising nothing but the devotion of all his powers to the service of the cause. "But lest some unlucky event should happen unfavorable to my reputation," he added, "I

beg it may be remembered by every gentleman in the room that I this day declare, with the utmost sincerity, I do not think myself equal to the command I am honored with. As to pay, sir," he continued, addressing the President, " I beg leave to assure the Congress that as no pecuniary compensation could have tempted me to accept this arduous employment, I do not wish to make any profit from it. I will keep an exact account of my expenses. Those, I doubt not, they will discharge, and that is all I desire."

Soon after this ceremony was completed, he wrote a farewell letter to Mrs. Washington and another to his stepson Jack Custis, telling him that he must now take care of his mother and manage his own property. He also wrote to the officers of the independent companies of Virginia, which had placed themselves under his direction, and bade adieu to his brother John Augustine, asking him and his sister to visit Mrs. Washington and stay with her as long as possible. Then he reviewed the Philadelphian troops, and on June 23, 1775, eight days after his appointment, he started for Boston, accompanied by General Charles Lee, who had been appointed

third in command. Before he was fairly on the road, however, he was met by a dispatch rider, informing him that the battle of Bunker Hill had been fought, and, encouraged by the splendid stand which the American troops had made against the English regulars, he hurried on, and resting only one night at King's Bridge, New York, where he placed General Philip Schuyler in command, reached the American camp at Cambridge on July 2, 1775. Here, in expectation of his arrival, the word of parole had been made *Washington* and the countersign *Virginia*, and the following day he took command of the army, which received him with enthusiastic cheers, his reputation and his appearance alike inspiring the utmost confidence.

Certainly his bearing as he rode past the straggling lines of farmers and minutemen left nothing to be desired, his tall, athletic figure, his calm, determined face, his handsome uniform, and his superb horsemanship all combining to win him attention and respect. He was then forty-three years of age, and although he weighed almost two hundred pounds, his height made him appear slender, and despite the years that had elapsed since

his retirement from the army, he had never lost the erect carriage of a soldier. Altogether, he was in as perfect condition for the work that lay before him as though he had been in training for it all his life, and his sixteen years' experience as a planter had schooled his temper and given him a knowledge of men and business such as few military commanders have ever possessed. Probably those who appointed him never thought of him as a systematic man of business, but it was fortunate that all his talents were not warlike, for the immediate situation at Boston demanded good management rather than generalship. For the time being the English were greatly outnumbered and closely confined within the limits of the town, but there was no system or discipline worthy of the name among the American troops, and no one knew exactly what forces or supplies or ammunition were available.

Washington's first task, therefore, was to create order out of chaos, and before he had been long at work he discovered a most alarming condition of affairs. On his arrival he had been informed that there was abundant ammunition for the troops, but it soon appeared

that those in charge of this matter had blundered terribly and that there was practically no powder whatsoever. Had General Gage, Braddock's old lieutenant, who commanded the British forces in Boston during the early part of the siege, known this, he could have sallied from the town and destroyed the whole American army almost without resistance, and Washington was fairly aghast at the possibility. Nevertheless, it would not do for him to appear alarmed, so he concealed the facts as far as possible and so arranged his forces that the English were given the idea that he was planning an immediate attack. This succeeded better than he dared hope, for General Gage, remembering Bunker Hill, did not venture from his intrenchments, and General Howe, who succeeded him, was even less adventurous. Still, Washington was exceedingly anxious, for at any moment a spy or a traitor might inform the enemy that the guns which threatened them were empty, and once that was known, all would be lost. To guard against this he ordered that none but native Americans, or those with a wife or family in the country, should be appointed as sentries or outposts. Moreover, every effort was made

to conceal the dangerous situation from all but the highest officers, and only a few of them were intrusted with the secret. Gloomy as this state of affairs was, it grew worse as time wore on, for the troops who had enlisted for a few months' service began departing to their homes, and while he kept Howe's twenty odd regiments constantly in fear of attack, Washington actually disbanded one army and formed another almost under his enemy's nose, and in point of discipline and effectiveness the second army was a vast improvement on the first.

Before his arrival there had been little or no personal dignity even among the highest officers. Indeed, one of the first sights that greeted him after he assumed command was General Israel Putnam riding into camp with an old woman perched behind his saddle and though the Commander-in-Chief laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks at the absurd appearance of the old Indian fighter, he knew such exhibitions did not inspire the troops with respect for their superiors.

The truth was, however, that no distinctions existed between the officers and men. All were good patriots and those who were

placed in command hesitated to give orders, and those in the ranks resented receiving them. In fact, the whole army was nothing but a mob, and an unarmed mob at that. But Washington understood that courage and patriotism alone would not avail against a disciplined enemy, and day after day he labored with infinite tact and patience, but uncompromising firmness, to drive this lesson home. Such work was not at all to his taste and had he consulted his own inclinations he would doubtless have preferred to lead the expedition against Quebec, which he intrusted to Benedict Arnold. There was no glory and very little credit in the wearisome task of organizing an effective fighting force. Indeed, the fact that the men were enlisted for only a few months at a time practically undid his work and forced him to do it over and over again, but how faithfully he performed this ungrateful duty can be seen from the minute instructions that fill his Orderly Books, many of which are still in existence. Once he was sorely tempted to make a real instead of a pretended attack upon Boston early in the campaign, despite his scanty supply of powder, but the hesitation of his officers finally

made him realize that the risk would be too great.

Meanwhile, some Virginian troops arrived, dressed in the Indian hunting costume he had recommended during the Ohio campaign, and after more than six months of weary waiting a fair supply of powder was procured. Almost at the same time Henry Knox returned from Fort Ticonderoga, where he had been sent to bring the cannon which Ethan Allen had captured, and with this invaluable material at the disposal of the army, preparations were at once begun for closing in on the enemy.

A range of hills known as Dorchester Heights overlooked the town, and if Washington could distract General Howe's attention until he had time to fortify this position he saw that he would hold the city at his mercy. There was not much danger that the English commander would realize the vital importance of this ground after having neglected the opportunity of seizing it for so many months, but to keep him occupied elsewhere a severe cannonade was opened against the enemy on March 2, 1776, and maintained for two successive nights from the opposite direc-

tion, while the artillery and supplies were moved to a sheltered spot near the high ground. Then on the third night a great force of men was thrown forward and set at work digging intrenchments and mounting the heaviest guns. Ignorant as the soldiers had been of military drill, they needed no instruction in the use of the shovel and the pick, and despite the fact that the ground was frozen hard, within a few hours Dorchester Heights, lined with rifle pits and bristling with cannon, threatened the English forces with capture or destruction.

Then, and not until then, did General Howe discover what had happened, but one glance was sufficient to advise him of his danger, and he instantly began preparations for attacking the still unfinished fortification. Before his plans were completed, however, he became convinced that unless he could escape by the sea he would be hopelessly trapped, and in almost panicky haste he bundled his troops aboard the men-of-war in the harbor, abandoning vast quantities of cannon and supplies, and Washington took possession of the city on March 17, 1776, without the loss of a man.

CHAPTER XIV

IN THE FACE OF DISASTER

The Americans did not remain long in Boston after the British sailed away. In fact, before their ships had left the harbor Washington began sending troops to New York, for he knew that the English Government would be highly displeased at the surrender of Boston, and it was probable that General Howe would attempt to redeem his reputation by capturing one of the other seaports. Therefore, the moment he was convinced that his opponent intended to attack New York, he hastened there with the remainder of the army to head him off.

Here a much more difficult problem than that at Boston confronted the American commander, for he was now endeavoring to keep the enemy from capturing a city instead of trying to drive them out of one, and he had neither ships to defend the harbor nor any

means of knowing from what point the attack would be made. Moreover, many of the people of New York favored the King, and they did their best to injure the American cause and embarrass the General. Nevertheless, he set resolutely to work once more at building up an army, but much that he had already accomplished had to be done again, for despite his wishes, Congress continued to enlist troops for short periods, and many of the soldiers returned to their homes the moment their term of service expired. Indeed, Congress had such extraordinary ideas on military matters that, after many letters of advice and protest, Washington went to Philadelphia and explained what was needed, at the same time expressing his opinion that the colonies should at once declare themselves independent of England and fight until their independence was acknowledged.

In the meantime, General Israel Putnam took command at New York, and by the time Washington returned some progress had been made in preparing the city for the expected attack. But although barricades had been erected in the streets and batteries on the river fronts, and all the lead torn from the

roofs of the houses to make bullets, there were not men enough to guard the various approaches to the town, and it was practically defenseless when the English fleet sailed into the bay and landed an army on Staten Island. General Howe appeared to be in no hurry, however, and Washington took advantage of his slowness to strengthen the defenses on the Long Island shore, at or near Brooklyn, and otherwise make ready for battle.

Meanwhile, the independence of the colonies was proclaimed by Congress, and on July 9, 1776, Washington paraded his troops near what is now the City Hall and had the Declaration of Independence read to them by the commanding officers. The rejoicings over this event had scarcely ceased, however, when some of the English ships sailed up the North River, despite the fire of the American batteries posted on the shore, and it was soon evident that nothing could be done to prevent the whole fleet from following whenever it pleased, and landing an army to attack the city in the rear. But Lord Howe, the Admiral of the fleet and brother of the English General, instead of doing this, sent a letter advising Washington that King George was now ready

to pardon his rebellious subjects, and perhaps grant some of the requests which the colonists had made before the war, provided they would promptly lay down their arms. This letter was, however, merely addressed to *Mr.* Washington so the Commander-in-Chief declined to receive it, and Lord Howe was given to understand that it was now too late to propose such terms to America.

Both sides accordingly resumed preparations for fighting, but the British forces remained inactive for about five weeks, when they suddenly landed on Long Island at Gravesend Bay, near Brooklyn, where General Sullivan was in charge. As soon as he heard of this movement, Washington placed General Putnam in command and hurried reënforcements to him, personally inspecting his troops and giving minute instructions for guarding the roads. He then returned to New York, and for a few days all was quiet. On the night of August 26, 1776, however, the British plans were completed, and finding one of the most important roads unguarded, General Howe approached within striking distance of the American lines without being discovered. At the same time other divisions of

his army were moving forward by other roads, and before daylight a fierce battle was raging. The American troops were completely surprised and defeated, and so well had Howe concealed his movements that Washington did not learn what was happening until almost noon, and before he arrived on the scene the day was already lost. Indeed, the shattered army had by that time been driven behind its intrenchments at Brooklyn Heights, and was preparing for a last desperate stand, but just at the critical moment when the British were sweeping everything before them, their advance suddenly halted and the exhausted Americans received an unexpected but sorely needed breathing spell.

Up to this moment Washington's generalship had not been severely tested. The siege of Boston had demanded neither quick judgment nor brilliancy, and he had seen but little actual service in the field. Now, however, he was in a position where he had to think and act on the instant. The army was in dire peril, and if he was to save it, there was not a moment to lose. Before him, and almost within musket shot, lay Howe's victorious forces, and beyond them the men-of-war and other ves-

sels waited, needing only a signal to start them up the river. Evidently, the British commander could not quite make up his mind whether to crush the Americans by an immediate attack on their front, or to wait until he could move the ships around to their rear and cut off their retreat. But while he hesitated, Washington acted.

With the utmost secrecy and speed he sent orders to have every sort of rowboat and barge and sailing craft which could be found between the city and Spuyten Duyvil forwarded to him at Brooklyn, and so promptly was he obeyed that within eight hours the strange fleet was assembled. Meanwhile, he called his officers together and directed that as soon as it became dark they should tell the troops to prepare themselves for a night attack and then move them toward the shore, one regiment at a time, taking care not to let them know where they were going until they reached the boats, lest there should be any hurry or confusion. One detachment was to be left guarding the intrenchments nearest the enemy until the last moment, and no noise of any kind was to be made.

It was nearly nine o'clock on August 29,

1776, before these preparations were completed, but at that hour the troops began to move on board, a regiment of fishermen from Marblehead and Gloucester furnishing the crews. At times it seemed as though the British must hear the creaking artillery wheels and the tramping of the men, but a heavy fog concealed their movements, and boat after boat pushed off without mishap. Suddenly the roar of a heavy cannon shook the earth and for a moment Washington believed that his maneuver had been discovered, and that the enemy were about to attack. But word soon came that the discharge had been caused by spiking a gun which could not be moved, and the work of departure was instantly resumed. Then to the general's utter dismay the detachment which had been left to guard the farthest breastworks and deceive the enemy, mistook its orders and appeared at the shore hours before its time. The retreat now threatened to end in disaster, for it was scarcely possible that the British sentries had not observed the withdrawal of the rear guard, and an attack at this crisis meant nothing less than the destruction of the entire force. Nevertheless, Washington did not lose

his head, but quietly ordered the detachment back to its intrenchments, and it reached them without its movement being discovered.

At first an adverse wind impeded the retreat, and then as the night wore on and the breeze died down the heavy tide began to sweep the boats in the wrong direction, and once more the expedition was in peril. Before morning dawned, however, the wind freshened in the right direction, and finally the last barge was pushed from the shore, and the last man to step aboard it was Washington. Thus the whole American army slipped slowly and silently away under cover of the friendly fog, carrying all its ammunition and equipment, and shortly after sunrise General Howe discovered that his prey had escaped him, and that the American commander had performed the apparently impossible feat of safely landing nine thousand troops on the opposite shore without the loss of a man or a gun.

CHAPTER XV

FIGHTING FOR POSITION

With the river between it and the enemy, the American army was, for the time being, in safety, and General Howe did not immediately pursue, for both he and his brother, the Admiral, thought that the Americans might now be more inclined to end the war and they knew that England was far more anxious, at that time, to reconcile the Americans than to defeat them. Lord Howe, therefore, sent the American General Sullivan, who had been taken prisoner at the battle of Long Island, to inform Congress that the English Government was ready to talk peace, and John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Edward Rutledge were appointed by Congress to meet his lordship on Staten Island and hear what he had to say. It soon appeared, however, that nothing could be done unless the Americans were willing to submit again to the rule of England, and accordingly no agreement was reached.

In the meantime, Washington had established his headquarters on Harlem Heights, leaving five thousand troops under General Putnam in the lower part of the town to patrol the streets and maintain order. He knew that if he remained on Manhattan Island and the enemy succeeded in getting behind him his army would be caught in a trap from which there would be little or no chance of escape. He, therefore, determined to abandon New York whenever Howe made a serious attack against the city, but he intended to delay his landing as long as possible and fall back slowly before the British advance. With this idea he stationed part of his forces at various points along the shore of the East River, with strict orders to hold the enemy in check, so that Putnam would have time to collect his men and withdraw to Harlem Heights, if it became necessary to evacuate the town. To his utter disgust, however, the troops which had been left to guard the intrenchments, at what is now known as East Thirty-fourth Street, became panic-stricken when Howe began to cannonade them from the Brooklyn shore on September 15, 1776, and gave way almost before the first boat-

load of the enemy crossed the river. The moment he caught the sound of firing, Washington mounted his horse, and dashing to the spot, endeavored to drive the fugitives back to their posts, but though he struck at them with the flat of his sword and threatened to shoot them down, they fled past him, and he himself barely escaped capture as the British advance guard swarmed over the abandoned intrenchments and poured up Thirty-fourth Street unopposed. Indeed, if Howe had pushed resolutely forward, throwing a strong force across the island along the line of Thirty-fourth Street from shore to shore, he would have trapped Putnam's entire division. But the day was suffocatingly hot and an invitation to luncheon tempted him to halt at Mrs. Murray's hospitable mansion, near what is now called Murray Hill, and here his hostess made herself so very agreeable that he and his staff tarried longer than they intended, and while they toasted their entertainer, Putnam's forces, piloted by Aaron Burr, slipped swiftly along the opposite side of the town and arrived, covered with dust and perspiration, and gasping for breath, but safe and sound, under the shelter of Harlem Heights.

The main body of the American army at this point was strongly intrenched in a triple line, stretching from the Hudson River on one side to Long Island Sound on the other, and Washington determined to make a stand there if Howe continued the pursuit. He, therefore, spent the night of September 15th in inspecting and strengthening his defenses, and it was then that he noticed a young artillery officer who was posting his guns with such rare good judgment that he made some inquiries concerning him. He was a boy about nineteen years of age, he was informed, who had recently been a student at King's (now Columbia) College, but had been given a captain's commission in the artillery, where he had already done good service. His name was Alexander Hamilton. It was probably then that the General determined to make him a member of his staff, to which position he was appointed four months later, and the acquaintance thus begun led to a lifelong friendship.

Howe moved swiftly once he was in motion, and the day after he landed in New York he hurled himself at the American intrenchments with the idea of breaking through them and cutting off Washington from further re-

WASHINGTON'S FIRST MEETING WITH ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

Harlem Heights, September 15, 1776.

treat. So certain was he that this could be done that his buglers are said to have advanced to the attack blowing a call which huntsmen use when a fox has "gone to ground," and is as good as caught, and which a sportsman like Washington would be sure to understand. Undoubtedly, he did understand it, but it also suggested overconfidence on the part of his adversary, and of this he instantly took advantage, with the result that when the clash came it was the English and not the American line that broke. Then followed a brief but fierce struggle near what is now the site of Grant's Tomb, and nineteen bullet holes in one fence rail behind which the British took shelter showed that the American marksmen on Harlem Heights were not to be despised, and the day closed without any perceptible impression on their lines. This apparently convinced the English commander that he could not pierce Washington's center, and he accordingly determined to try his ends. These could be approached only by water, but Howe had the necessary ships, and the American commander spent many anxious weeks while his opponent, who had suddenly become very cautious, prepared the next move.

Meanwhile, Washington attempted to discover his adversary's purpose by sending Captain Nathan Hale to Long Island, but the gallant young schoolmaster, caught in returning with the necessary information, was hanged as a spy, and the enemy's plans remained concealed.

Finally, after a month's delay, the British were detected stealing up the Sound in an attempt to circle Washington's left end, and to meet this move he fell back, delaying the enemy by throwing forward a body of sharpshooters whose deadly fire had precisely the effect which he hoped to produce, and gave him plenty of time to post his troops to advantage. Therefore, when Howe thought that he had swung out far enough and turned to skirt the end, he found Washington planted squarely across his path at White Plains, and it took him so long and cost him so dear to carry the first line of defense on what was known as Chatterton's Hill that he concluded to call a halt before making another attempt. This engagement, called the battle of White Plains, occurred on October 27th, fully six weeks after Howe had landed in New York, and the appearance of Washington's defenses

on the morning after Chatterton's Hill gave him further pause. It was well for the Americans, however, that military field glasses were not as powerful then as they have since been made, for the intrenchments which caused General Howe to hesitate consisted of nothing but cornstalks pulled up with the sod clinging to their roots and piled into the semblance of a formidable breastwork. But weak as they were, they looked dangerous from a distance, and Howe, who had acquired an immense respect for improvised defenses after the experience at Bunker Hill, decided not to risk a frontal attack. At the first favorable opportunity, however, Washington abandoned his flimsy shelter and dropped back about five miles to North Castle, where he secured himself in a really strong position. Here for a few days the English commander confronted him but made no attack, and the Americans, regaining confidence, began to believe that their line was impregnable. Then a strange sound of rumbling wheels and tramping feet from the direction of the British camp disturbed this pleasant dream and warned them that something unexpected was happening.

Something unexpected *was* happening.

Howe was rapidly heading for Dobb's Ferry, away over on the other side of the line on the Hudson River. His attempt to skirt the American left end had failed and he was now to try the right.

CHAPTER XVI

A RACE FOR LIFE

THE right end was Fort Washington on the Hudson near Spuyten Duyvil, and by dropping down to Dobb's Ferry, Howe virtually boxed it off from the rest of the line. By all the rules of war it should have been abandoned when Washington retreated to White Plains, but Cŏngress had all but forbidden this, and the Commander-in-Chief had ordered General Greene to hold fast or retreat as he thought best. Unfortunately, Greene believed that the place was strong enough to withstand any attack, and he was ignorant of the fact that there was a traitor in the fort who had furnished Howe with enough information to insure its capture. This was undoubtedly the explanation of the English General's sudden change of plan, but under any circumstances it was a brilliant move, for it placed him in a position where he could either

proceed up the river against Albany, or cross it and attack Philadelphia, or besiege Fort Washington, and the Americans were thus forced to divide their small army to be ready for any of these emergencies. For the endangered fortress, Washington could do little or nothing, but he posted a few thousand men under General Heath at Peekskill to guard the Highlands of the Hudson, and intrusted Lee with a strong force to hold the left end at North Castle until further orders, while he himself crossed the river with a force of about five thousand, which he posted at Hackensack to check any movement against Philadelphia through New Jersey.

These preparations had scarcely been made before Howe struck at Fort Washington and, aided by the private information he had received, soon had the place at his mercy. From the lofty Palisades on the other side of the river, Washington had a full view of the movements of the British troops and realizing what was about to happen, he sent a message to the commander, urging him to hold on until night, when some means of escape would be devised. The message arrived too late, however, and on November 16, 1776, the entire

garrison of nearly three thousand men, with much of the best arms and cannon which the American army possessed, fell into the hands of the enemy. The moment he saw the British flag floating above the fortress, Washington realized that there was not a moment to lose if the rest of the army was to be saved. Without an instant's hesitation he ordered the evacuation of Fort Lee on the opposite side of the Hudson, sent an express to General Lee instructing him to cross the river at once and join him in New Jersey and, gathering up the few regiments under his immediate command, began a retreat, which is almost without a parallel in the history of warfare.

Scarcely had the garrison at Fort Lee received orders to abandon its post, when Lord Cornwallis, at the head of six thousand troops, scaled the Palisades and forced the rear guard to leave almost all their equipment and supplies in order to avoid capture. Even then it was not at all certain that they would escape, for the vigorous English General gave them no chance to rest, and by the time they overtook the balance of the little army, Cornwallis was close upon their heels.

Never did a commander face a more hope-

less situation than that which now confronted Washington. He was in an open, and almost flat country, affording no shelter for an inferior force to meet a superior one on anything like even terms, and rendering concealment practically impossible. The weather was cruelly cold, the ground frozen, the troops poorly armed, and clothed in whatever they happened to be wearing at the moment they started on their flight, and every mile they traveled, more and more men deserted the ranks. Indeed, the whole force at his disposal was soon reduced to about three thousand, and there was very little hope that even this handful would continue to follow him, for the defeats and constant retreating had discouraged the whole country, and thousands of half-hearted patriots hurried to profess their loyalty to King George when Cornwallis hauled his cannon up the Palisades. Indeed, the whole Revolution was crumbling to pieces as Washington fled across the frozen flat lands of New Jersey.

Yet in the face of this desperate situation the American Commander-in-Chief did not despair or even falter. Now he slipped behind the Hackensack River, just beyond his keen

pursuers' grasp—now he dashed across the Passaic, gaining a momentary breathing spell as the enemy hesitated on the farther shore—now he divided his forces to throw the hunters off his trail, and dodged behind the Raritan River, destroying its bridges in the nick of time, while Hamilton's well-directed cannon held the pursuit in check—now he staggered on toward Princeton, shivering under the icy winter blasts, always sending more and more urgent orders to Lee to hasten his arrival, and never suspecting that his friend was playing false.

But Lee could see Washington's plight as plainly as though he were by his side, and he had no desire to share it. On the contrary, he had decided that his commander's loss would be his gain, and that out of the wreck of Washington's fortunes he, being then second in command, would rise to the highest grade. Therefore, he pretended to misunderstand his orders, and answered the call for help with excuses instead of troops.

Meanwhile, the desperate flight continued and Washington, though hard pressed, was not yet at the end of his resources. With a twist he was over the Millstone River and an-

other turn brought him within a short march of the Delaware. Up to this point the various streams, behind whose friendly interference he had darted and squirmed, had merely afforded him temporary protection, but here was a broad water-way which might effectually shield him for some time. Without the loss of a moment, he hurried forward an advance guard with orders to secure every boat along the Delaware for a distance of seventy miles, and as the men flew to perform their errand, the fate of the American Revolution hung in the balance. If the boats could be procured the army was safe; if not, the end was at hand. But the boats were found, and sinking those they could not use, the exhausted soldiers clambered on board the others and pushed from the shore. No army ever had a more hairbreadth escape, for the British advance guard reached the river while the American rear guard was still in the act of crossing, and a few long-range guns would have sunk the entire flotilla long before the boats could have been beached in safety on the Pennsylvania shore.

To Cornwallis the situation was exasperating in the extreme, and he made a hurried

search for any sort of craft capable of ferrying his army, but without the least success. Scarcely a rowboat had been left afloat, and there was nothing to be done but build barges or a pontoon bridge, or wait until the river froze. The latter seemed the wisest course, for the ice was rapidly forming and all the prospects seemed to indicate a period of extraordinary cold.

Therefore, being joined by General Howe and acting under his orders, his Lordship handed over his command to one of his subordinates with instructions to cross the river and finish the campaign at the earliest possible moment, while he himself returned to New York, where he expected to set sail for England within a few weeks, carrying the news that the rebellion was at an end.

CHAPTER XVII

WITH HIS BACK TO THE WALL

Lord Cornwallis was not alone in his opinion that the struggle for independence in America had practically ceased. General Howe felt so thoroughly convinced of it that he was well content to leave a comparatively small force to finish up the work on the Delaware, while he returned with the balance of his army to comfortable winter quarters in New York. The British Government gave signal proof of its satisfaction, for it rewarded the successful commander by investing him with the order of Knight Commander of the Bath and Sir William was freely credited with having stamped out the rebellion. Indeed, many Americans shared this view, and when Congress abandoned Philadelphia and sought refuge in Baltimore, even the most devoted patriots began to fear that the fight could not be maintained much longer. Certainly the

soldiers believed that the end had come, for they were rapidly dispersing to their homes throughout the country, and the little force which still held together on the Delaware had been hunted almost to death, and cold and hunger threatened to make them an easy prey for the enemy who camped upon their blood-stained trail. Lee, it is true, had at last set his troops in motion, but he believed that the American cause was on the brink of ruin, and had no intention of involving himself in the disaster. Altogether the situation was about as desperate as could well be imagined, and when the ice began to form in the Delaware, the wreck of the Revolution seemed almost certain.

There was one American, however, who neither despaired nor permitted others to despair. Probably no one understood the peril of the moment better than Washington, but though he was prepared for the worst, he had resolved to resist to the last and his plans were all made to that end. If the river froze, and the enemy crossed, he intended to split his army into bands and taking them to the mountains, wait for an opportunity to gather them together again. But no idea of surrender ever

entered his mind. Meanwhile, he continued to report regularly to Congress, informing it of the army's needs and submitting plans for its betterment; gave orders to the various generals under his command; conducted a correspondence with Sir William Howe concerning an exchange of prisoners, and generally attended to all his duties with as much care and calmness as he had displayed at any time during the war. Even when the news reached him that General Lee had been caught sleeping in a farmhouse at some distance from his troops, and been gobbled up by a squad of British cavalry, and the increasing cold indicated that the foe would soon be able to cross the ice, he did not lose his courage. On the contrary, at this critical moment he actually began planning to cross the river and attack the enemy.

Rash as such an enterprise seemed, it was by no means hopeless, for the British commanders, believing that the American army was at their mercy, had taken no precautions to protect their own forces, and their nearest troops, scattered up and down the river, were separated from each other by dangerously wide intervals. Of this fact Washington was

soon made aware, for he had a number of spies in the guise of countrymen who rode in and out of the enemy's camp, ostensibly selling tobacco and farm products, but really gathering information for the benefit of their chief. As soon as they advised him, therefore, of the careless arrangement of the opposing forces he instantly began preparations for catching them off their guard.

By this time General Sullivan, who succeeded to Lee's command after the latter's capture, had brought his troops safely into camp, marching almost as many miles in a day as Lee had covered in a week, and this reënforcement was of the utmost importance to Washington. He knew that the whole force under his command was still much smaller than that of the enemy, but if he could keep their various commands from going to each other's assistance he might attack the most exposed posts in overwhelming numbers and either capture or destroy them before they could be reënforced. To insure the success of this scheme, however, it was necessary that the plans should be kept absolutely secret, and on Christmas eve he called his chief officers together in a house from which every-

one else was excluded, and issued his orders behind closed and guarded doors. Two of the commanders were instructed to cross the river on Christmas night at different points and attack the enemy at daylight the next morning, while he himself crossed at Trenton and moved against the Hessians stationed at that place. To make sure that the three expeditions should move at the same moment, all the officers set their watches by Washington's and it was agreed that the men should not be told where they were going or what they were expected to do until it was absolutely necessary.

These preparations completed, the officers quietly returned to their quarters and at two o'clock the next afternoon Washington's regiments were assembled, each man carrying a rifle, a blanket, three days' provisions, and forty rounds of ammunition; the password was announced as " Victory or death "; the officers were instructed to pin bits of white paper to their hats so their men might recognize them in the dark, and without a word of explanation the little army marched rapidly and silently away.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

It was bitterly cold when the expedition started, and by the time the troops arrived at McKonkey's or "Eight Mile" Ferry where Washington had assembled his boats, the Delaware was almost frozen over. The Marblehead fishermen who had done such good service in the retreat from Long Island were again at the oars, however, and boat after boat was forced through the floating ice and beached on the opposite shore in safety. Nevertheless, the hours slipped quickly by as the oarsmen struggled against wind and current, and by eleven at night they had not accomplished half their task. Then, to add to the misery of the shivering troops, a wild storm of sleet and hail began, drenching the men to the skin and rendering the passage of the river doubly difficult. Under such circumstances it was four in the morning before the last boat load was landed

on the Jersey shore, and dawn was the time appointed for the three movements against the British lines. Neither of the other expeditions had even succeeded in crossing the river, but despite this bad news Washington remained calm and undiscouraged. Not a man or a gun had thus far been lost in the perilous journey, and Trenton was only eight miles away. If it was too late for a night attack, or a surprise, there was still time to strike the Hessians a heavy blow before their friends could come to their aid, and the moment the last man was landed, Washington gave the order to march.

Exhausted as they were after nine hours' exposure to the bitter weather, the troops responded gamely and, wrapping their guns in their blankets to protect them from the sleet, they pushed resolutely forward in the teeth of the pitiless storm. After covering a few miles, however, a half for breakfast was ordered, but many of the men, too tired to eat, sank down in the freezing mud, and when the march was resumed their comrades had great difficulty in rousing them from sleep. Washington did not dismount during this brief rest, nor did he consult with his staff. All his plans

were completed and the only word he uttered was one of encouragement to the men as they resumed their march.

By this time the dawn was already streaking the sky and the light showed the little army stumbling along in two divisions, one following the river and the other the upper road running parallel to it; the men marching with heads bent against the driving sleet, the steaming horses straining at the cannon traces and floundering in the treacherous mud at every step, the officers carrying muskets like their men and watching to see that no rifle or ammunition was exposed to the wet. Save for the splashing and trampling, not a sound came from the shadowy columns which slipped along in the slush with grim determination, and among those who silently plodded forward with bits of white paper on their hats were Henry Knox and Alexander Hamilton, John Sullivan and Lord Stirling, Nathanael Greene, John Stark, the veteran Indian fighter; William Washington, a cousin of the General, and young Lieutenant James Monroe, the future President of the United States.

Meanwhile, the unsuspecting Hessians were enjoying a sound slumber in their bar-

racks, after a gay Christmas celebration which had lasted far into the night. Colonel Rall, their commander, devoted himself exclusively to the festivities, declining even to see an excited loyalist who demanded a private interview with him on a matter of much importance, and when the man informed him, in writing, that Washington's troops were crossing the Delaware, he slipped the note, unopened, into his pocket and never thought of it again. With this example, therefore, it is not surprising that discipline was everywhere relaxed; that the outposts were not properly manned, and that no vision of the mud-splashed columns that were converging upon them troubled the dreams of the drowsy garrison.

About eight o'clock in the morning, however, the whole town was suddenly awakened by the sound of firing, and before the startled soldiers were fairly out of their beds, the sentries and outposts came flying into the town hotly pursued by the vanguard of the American army. Even then, neither Colonel Rall nor his officers fully realized what had happened, for they ordered a small company of men to drive back the advancing Americans

and proceeded to form their regiments into regular line of battle. But Washington gave the Hessians no chance to complete their manœuvers. His opportunity had come and all his plans were perfected. With incredible speed, Knox and Hamilton wheeled their guns into position, uncovered them and began firing with fatal precision into the half-formed ranks, while a crowd of American sharpshooters stormed the houses and picked off the officers from behind windows and doors with unerring accuracy. Neither discipline nor personal bravery availed at such a crisis, and when Colonel Rall fell, mortally wounded, with the note of warning still unopened in his pocket, the day was practically lost. A few wild volleys were fired at the encircling hosts and Washington's cousin William and Lieutenant James Monroe were wounded, but most of the bullets went wide of their marks, while the American riflemen, seldom missing their aim, created havoc in the huddled ranks of their opponents. Finally Rall's own regiment broke and fled, and from that moment confusion reigned supreme. In the midst of shots, shouts, and all the uproar of blind panic, with men flying hither and thither in vain efforts

to find safety, one company dashed in frantic flight across the bridge over the neighboring Assanpink Creek and made their escape, but before others could follow their example, Washington rushed a body of troops into position, blocking the road and completely surrounding the town. Then, as his whole forces moved forward, the bewildered Hessians, caught as in a net, threw their guns on the ground, their officers raised their hats on their swords in token of surrender, and the battle of Trenton ended.

Washington lost no time in idle rejoicing, but gathering together the captured cannon and horses, and almost a thousand prisoners, he hastened over the Delaware again and within twenty-four hours was once more safely in his camp.

CHAPTER XIX

CORNERED BUT NOT CAUGHT

The news of the victory at Trenton spread through the country with well-nigh incredible speed. Horsemen dashed through the towns and villages shouting the tidings, but even before they reached Baltimore, where Congress was assembled, the members had voted that Washington be given almost unlimited powers to increase the army and conduct the war as he thought best. In fact, Congress practically made him a dictator for six months, and had he been a vain, instead of a modest man, he might easily have had his head turned by the honors which were thrust upon him. But at this crisis he gave the first proofs of his real greatness. "Instead of thinking myself freed from all civil obligations by this mark of confidence," he wrote, "I shall constantly bear in mind that as the sword was the last resort for the preservation of our liberties, so

it ought to be the first thing laid aside when those liberties are firmly established."

With these quiet words he turned his attention to his forces on the Delaware, and it was well that he wasted no time in self-glorification, for the British commanders were already preparing to retrieve the disaster to the Hessians by wiping out the entire American army. Indeed, the moment the dispatch riders arrived in New York with the news from Trenton, Lord Cornwallis hastily disembarked from the vessel on which he was about to sail for England and, gathering up eight thousand troops, made a forced march which brought him to Princeton almost at a bound.

In the meantime, Washington had again crossed the Delaware to Trenton, but learning of Cornwallis's rapid approach, he sought refuge behind the little Assanpink Creek which flows past the town, and to gain time for this movement he threw forward a body of troops under General Greene, with orders to delay the enemy by every possible means. Certainly the situation was perilous in the extreme, for Cornwallis's force, which included the best regiments in the British army, was sufficient

to annihilate or capture the Americans, and to attempt the repassage of the Delaware in the face of hostile artillery would have been courting destruction.

Time was, therefore, of vital importance to Washington, and Greene and his men obtained it for him. At every turn of the road from Princeton and under cover of every thicket they lay in wait for the enemy, and so deadly was their fire that the advancing infantry was frequently forced to halt and call the artillery to its support, with the result that eight hours were consumed in covering as many miles. Indeed, by the time the vanguard of the enemy reached Trenton, the sun of January 2, 1777 was already sinking and Washington was in comparative safety behind the Assanpink Creek. Nevertheless, Cornwallis made several attacks upon the bridge over that stream before nightfall, and had it not been for the skillful posting of the artillery, it is not unlikely that he would have effected a crossing and destroyed or captured Washington's whole force before another day had dawned. Darkness, the American cannon, and the exhaustion of his troops, however, soon caused the British commander to cease his attack, remarking of

Washington that he would "bag the old fox in the morning."

Now was the time for the American General to think quickly and coolly, if he was to save himself and his army, for the situation was almost hopeless and escape seemed impossible. But, face to face with danger, Washington stood unafraid. He knew from the size of the army confronting him that Cornwallis must have a considerable baggage train with food and ammunition somewhere behind him, and that he must have left a portion of his army to guard those supplies, either at Princeton or New Brunswick—the nearest and most convenient points for that purpose. If, therefore, the American army could be swung around the main body of the enemy during the night and hurled against this rear guard, all might not yet be lost.

The moment this thought occurred to him, Washington hastened to act. One company was left to pile rails on the camp fires and keep them blazing brightly through the night, and another was ordered to throw up intrenchments close to the British lines, using their pickaxes and shovels as noisily as possible to give the enemy every impression that they

were busily preparing for a desperate resistance on the morrow. Meanwhile, with blankets bound around the cannon wheels to muffle their rumbling, and with cautious tread, the whole army slipped away in the darkness, swinging wide of Trenton and circling toward Princeton with such secrecy and speed that some of the officers who slept at a distance from the main camp knew nothing at all of the movement until they woke up the next morning and found their comrades gone. Perhaps it might have been better if the march had been delayed a little, for before Princeton was reached, the skirmishers collided with part of the British rear guard moving forward to reënforce Corwallis, and a sharp encounter followed. At first the enemy supposed they were being attacked by a mere party of stragglers, but to their utter amazement they soon found themselves confronting the whole American army. There was nothing to do but fight or surrender, and they fought this army which had " dropped upon them from the clouds " with splendid courage, but the odds were hopeless and Washington tore through them like a whirlwind, allowing those that fled to Trenton to escape unmolested, but pursuing those that

turned to Princeton, until practically all were killed or captured.

Meanwhile, Cornwallis continued his preparations for bagging his fox, and it was not until he heard the sound of cannon behind him that he discovered that his bag had a hole in it. Even then he could not believe that his prey had escaped him and, swinging about, he pursued with the utmost vigor. It was well he did so, for with a few more hours at his disposal, Washington might have reached New Brunswick and captured or destroyed all the British provisions and supplies, with the military chest containing £70,000—a feat which might possibly have ended the war. The distance was, however, too great for his tired men with the enemy close upon their heels, and he therefore reluctantly abandoned this part of his plan and, turning to the Basking Ridge Hills, was soon safe from pursuit at Morristown.

The effect of this brilliant movement was to leave the British army practically stranded in New Jersey and to encourage the other American commanders to press forward. Putnam accordingly soon moved up from Philadelphia and occupied Princeton; other troops pushed

the enemy from Elizabethtown and Newark, and still others dropped down from Peekskill and seized Hackensack, until hardly a vestige of New Jersey remained to the invaders, and all parts of the American army were in close touch again.

Thus ended a campaign which for skill and daring has no parallel in military history, and which practically saved the American revolution at a time when the bravest hearts despaired.

CHAPTER XX

A GAME OF STRATEGY

For five months the American army remained unmolested at Morristown, but while the winter thus slipped away, Washington labored incessantly to prepare for the campaign which he knew the British were planning for the coming Spring. The amount of work which he undertook and accomplished between January and June, 1777, can be understood only by reading the immense mass of letters and orders which he wrote during that period. Virtually the whole burden of the Revolution rested on his shoulders and he bore it without a thought of himself. Under any circumstances the task would have been gigantic, but with the conditions as they were it was almost impossible. The States were suspicious of each other, and practically devoid of national feeling; the generals were jealous of one another, and easily offended; the business of the

country was nearly at a standstill; the army lacked almost everything necessary to make it an effective fighting force, and Congress had neither the money to supply its needs nor the authority to collect it.

All that could be done to meet this situation Washington did. He mortgaged or sold his own property and used the money to help pay and equip the troops; he persuaded the leading men of the various colonies to lay aside their differences and fight for the common cause; he tactfully smoothed over the petty quarrels among his officers, when patience was needed, and denounced them without mincing words, when plain talk was essential to discipline. Day after day, and week after week he kept at this exhausting work which was neither glorious nor heroic, nor even exciting, but which enabled him, by the end of May, to present a fairly bold front to the enemy.

It was not difficult to foresee what the next move of the British would or should be. Between New England and the rest of the colonies flowed the Hudson River. Once this was in the possession of the enemy, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine would be entirely cut

off from their sister colonies, for the British navy held absolute mastery of the sea, and if the Hudson were under similar control no more Southern troops would be able to cross into New England and no New England reënforcements could reach the South. With the colonies thus divided it would be a comparatively simple matter to suppress the whole Revolution. All this was perfectly evident to Washington, and to guard against it he devoted much time and attention to the defense of the river, purposely weakening the force under his immediate command by sending reënforcements there and holding himself in readiness to coöperate with them as soon as the enemy's plans were fully developed.

The opening moves of his opponents, however, were somewhat confusing, and as the strategy they employed was largely dictated from London by men wholly ignorant of America, it is not surprising that they did not handle the troops to the best advantage. Early in June, General Burgoyne started to invade New York from Canada, with the evident intention of beginning the conquest of the Hudson from the North, but instead of proceeding up the river to coöperate with him, General

Howe advanced through New Jersey, as though he intended to attack Philadelphia. To meet this move, Washington promptly marched his army to Middlebrook, New Jersey, an exceedingly strong position, where he was close enough to reach the Hudson without much loss of time, and near enough to Philadelphia to defend it in case of need. Then for almost three weeks Howe maneuvered his army, now advancing, and now retreating, with the apparent purpose of drawing Washington from his stronghold and tempting him to a general engagement.

But the American commander declined to walk into the trap. His business was to defend the Hudson and he did not intend to weaken his army by useless fighting. Like the experienced checker player who looks before he jumps, he saw the object of his adversary and stayed where he was, with the result that Howe soon wearied of the game and retired to Staten Island, the point from which he had originally started. Everything then indicated that he would at once move up the Hudson to meet Burgoyne, who was successfully making his way toward the river, and Washington, fully persuaded of this, returned to Morris-

town, from which he could speedily throw his forces across Howe's path. Indeed, so confident was he that Howe would not leave Burgoyne to fight his way unassisted in the wilderness through which he was descending, that two divisions of the army were actually sent over the river and the others held in readiness to cross at a moment's notice.

About this time, however, news arrived that Howe had placed his whole army on board the fleet and was sailing southward from New York, apparently bound for Philadelphia. Amazing as this seemed, Washington ordered the regiments which had been thrown across the Hudson back to the west shore of the river, and moved cautiously toward Philadelphia, "continually casting his eyes behind him," lest Howe's movement should prove to be a trick to lure him away from the real point of attack. His suspicions seemed fully justified by the news that followed, for the British fleet had no sooner been sighted at the mouth of the Delaware River than it again put to sea. This seemed positive proof that the whole maneuver was nothing but an elaborate effort to entice the Americans away from the Hudson, and the army was once more headed for the river.

But to Washington's astonishment neither the British commander nor his fleet appeared, and for weeks no one had the slightest idea what had become of them. That Howe had decided to abandon Burgoyne seemed too good to be true, for the whole countryside was already closing in on that General, and unless assistance soon reached him his fate was absolutely sealed. Nevertheless, all doubt vanished toward the end of August, when the fleet reappeared near the Head of Elk, in Chesapeake Bay, far to the south of Philadelphia, the British commander having journeyed for over three weeks to reach a point little or no nearer Philadelphia than he had been in July, on the ridiculous supposition that his ships could not sail up the Delaware. There was no time, however, to wonder at this error or to rejoice in Howe's unhoped-for appearance. The great fact was that his army had landed in Maryland, hundreds of miles away from Burgoyne, and the one object of the campaign now was to keep him occupied until the time for a rescue had gone by. With this object Washington hastened to Delaware and prepared to throw his whole army squarely across his opponent's path.

CHAPTER XXI

THE BATTLE OF BRANDYWINE

To defeat the enemy was almost more than Washington dared hope, as he had only eleven thousand men, many of whom had never been under fire, while Howe commanded eighteen thousand of the best and most perfectly equipped troops which England had thus far placed in the field. Nevertheless, success was not impossible, for the country was fairly defensible, and it was, presumably, more familiar to the Americans than to their opponents. But Howe was better served by his guides than he had been by his pilots on the Delaware, and soon after landing he advanced slowly but with the same sureness of purpose which had marked his advance at the battle of Long Island.

In the meantime Washington moved to Philadelphia, and here he met a young French nobleman who had just arrived from France,

to fight for the cause of American liberty. This was the Marquis de Lafayette, a boy in years but a man in character, who had seen service as an officer in the French army, and whose modesty and unselfishness at once made a favorable impression upon the Commander-in-Chief. Other Frenchmen had come to America with the idea of joining the army, but most of them had proved so insolent, greedy, and troublesome that Congress was in no mood to welcome the arrival of any more. But from the outset Lafayette displayed a very different spirit, for he promptly volunteered to serve without pay and without rank, saying that as soon as he had heard of American independence his heart was enlisted. Congress accordingly appointed him a Major-General, and when the army passed through Philadelphia he acted as one of Washington's Aides.

The troops had now been under arms for many weeks, and the long, rapid marches and countermarches they had made in meeting Howe's maneuvers had rendered them footsore and weary, but they entered the town with flags flying and drums beating, wearing sprigs of evergreen in their hats and otherwise presenting the best possible appearance. Never-

theless, the dusty and curiously uniformed ranks must have looked strange to the young Frenchman as they filed past him, and Washington remarked that he regretted not being able to make a better showing before an officer fresh from the army of France. Probably he said this to test his new acquaintance, but Lafayette promptly responded, "It is to learn, sir, and not to criticise that I am here," and this quiet, tactful reply of a boy not then twenty years of age instantly won the commander's respect. From that time forward he made the Marquis his friend, and a few days later, when the British outposts caught sight of the General reconnoitering the position of their army, they reported that he was closely attended by a very youthful officer dressed in a French uniform.

Washington stationed his forces near Wilmington, Delaware, immediately upon leaving Philadelphia, and for about two weeks he watched the enemy, skirmishing with their advance guard as they moved forward and falling back slowly while he searched for a favorable position at which to check their march. Between them and Philadelphia, and squarely across their path to that city, flowed

the Brandywine Creek, and behind this Washington posted his army on September 11, 1777.

The position was well chosen, for the stream had only one convenient ford, and this crossing, known as Chad's Ford, was guarded by steep banks, while to the right and left the American troops were so placed as to give every prospect of success. But on this occasion Howe handled his men with rare skill and judgment. In front of Chad's Ford he massed a heavy force under the German General Knyphausen, with the evident intention of forcing a passage of the river at that point, and while the Americans under General Greene were hotly engaged in repelling this attack, he and Lord Cornwallis led a strong force eighteen miles by a roundabout route to another ford far beyond the right flank commanded by General Sullivan.

From time to time vague reports reached Washington that a large number of the enemy were moving away from the field of battle, but having little or no cavalry he was unable to confirm this. Nevertheless, he warned Sullivan to be on his guard, but the information which that General received contradicted the rumors of danger and he took no particular

precautions to protect himself. Indeed, it was not until a great cloud of dust disclosed the presence of the enemy that he realized that his flank was being turned, and it was then too late to do much more than save his force from destruction.

The British commanders gave their opponents no chance to recover from their surprise, and the red-coated regulars dashed across the ford and hurled themselves upon Sullivan's troops with well-nigh resistless force. For a moment it seemed as though a panic were inevitable, for many of the militia regiments gave way at the first onslaught and a period of hopeless confusion followed. In vain the officers called on their men to stand firm, and Lafayette, throwing himself into the thickest of the fight, fell with a bullet through his leg, and was only saved from capture or death by another officer, who helped him on his horse and hurried him to a place of safety.

Meanwhile Washington, hearing the firing far away on his right and fearing some disaster, dashed toward the sound, followed by his Aides and guided by a frightened and unwilling old man, named Joseph Brown, who had been hoisted on a horse and told to lead the

way at top speed. Away they dashed across the fields, flying over fences and ditches, Washington continually urging his guide to set a faster pace and exclaiming " Push along, old man! Push along! " whenever he showed signs of weakening. But despite this wild steeple-chase, before the Commander-in-Chief could reach the scene of action, the defeated columns came rolling back in dire confusion.

One glance was sufficient to convince him that the attack on Chad's Ford had been merely a feint, and that if this flank movement was not speedily checked the enemy would get behind him, and his whole army would be caught between two fires. He therefore ordered Greene to fall back from Chad's Ford and come to Sullivan's rescue, and so skillfully were his orders obeyed that the British advance was halted and the rout which had already begun was turned into a respectable retreat.

Meanwhile, however, General Knyphausen took advantage of Greene's withdrawal to push across Chad's Ford, and before nightfall Howe had a clear road to Philadelphia.

CHAPTER XXII

A FIGHT IN A FOG

THE battle of Brandywine was not a ruinous disaster, but it cost the Americans fully a thousand men and eleven pieces of artillery, and it left Philadelphia practically defenseless. Washington was not the man to shirk responsibility for the result, however, and when an attempt was made to throw the blame on General Sullivan he promptly notified Congress of his disapproval. That he had been defeated, if not outgeneraled, was undoubtedly true, but the enemy had lost over six hundred men and he fully intended to make their victory far more expensive before the end of the campaign. His main object had been to keep his adversary busily engaged, and to accomplish that object he was willing to be defeated every day in the week.

Thus, while Congress hastily removed its books and papers to a place of safety, and its

supporters awaited the approach of the British with fear and trembling, he began a game of check and counter-check with his successful opponent which worried and delayed him almost beyond belief. The Schuylkill River still lay between the royal army and the town, and behind this the American forces were maneuvered so effectively that the British did not succeed in crossing it for twelve days after the battle of Brandywine, and did not occupy Philadelphia until September 26, 1777. In other words, Washington, at a very slight cost, forced his victorious foe to consume more than two weeks in advancing twenty-six miles, during which time the net was being steadily drawn around Burgoyne in the New York wilderness, and when the troops at last marched into the city Benjamin Franklin had good reason for remarking that Howe had not taken Philadelphia, but that Philadelphia had taken Howe.

For a week after this event Washington remained quietly at Pottsgrove (now *Pottstown*), on the Schuylkill River, about thirty-five miles from Philadelphia, watching for an opportunity to attack. By this time he had learned enough of what was happening in New

York to make him sure that Burgoyne was caught unless speedy assistance reached him, and this cheering news determined him to take any risk to prevent Howe from starting to the rescue. Therefore, the moment he learned that his opponent had withdrawn several regiments to help destroy the forts on the Delaware River and open the way for the fleet, he determined to strike.

The main body of the British was posted at Germantown, a little settlement some six miles from Philadelphia, and approachable from Pottsgrove by four roads. The town itself boasted but one street and this was flanked on either side by private residences surrounded by gardens. Near the head of this street stood a handsome stone dwelling belonging to Mr. Justice Chew, and in the fields in front of this house lay the Fortieth Regiment commanded by Colonel Musgrave. Farther down the street, behind what was known as the Market House, other regiments occupied strong positions, all within easy support of the garrison in Philadelphia, while, for a good mile in advance of the Chew Mansion, Howe had thrown forward a whole battalion of light infantry and a swarm of pickets and sentries.

The only hope of defeating this well-posted force lay in a surprise, and Washington selected the night of October 3, 1777, for the attempt. Starting his men on their long march about seven in the evening, he moved them so rapidly that they reached their destination before sunrise the next morning, and though some vague rumors of his advance reached the British camp, they excited no alarm. Just outside the town he divided his command into four columns, assigning each to one of the four roads leading into the town, with orders that they should all press forward at the same moment, and pouring in from different directions, drive the attack home with a fury that would create confusion, divide the enemy, and afford an opportunity for overwhelming its various detachments, one at a time. This plan, which aimed at nothing less than the destruction of the entire British army, was an ambitious and daring move, in view of the fact that the Americans were outnumbered, but it was well thought out, and the four divisions moved to their posts full of confidence and hope, John Marshall, the future Chief Justice of the United States, marching with one of the columns. By this time, however, a heavy fog

hung over the roads and fields, and before the final advance was fairly started the converging columns were completely screened from each other's view, and the men had to grope their way forward with considerable caution.

Down the main road toward the head of the street crept the Americans under General Anthony Wayne, and before long they struck the British sentries and gobbled them up almost before they had time to cry out. The surprise was complete, but as the Americans pressed forward, sweeping everything before them, they suddenly stumbled upon Colonel Musgrave's Regiment, which sprang to arms, taking cover behind fences, walls, and hedges, and a fierce struggle followed, the combatants fighting at close range and firing at the flashes of each other's muskets through the curtain of fog. It was only for a moment, however, that the onrush was checked and most of the Fortieth Regiment was soon flying at top speed from the victorious Americans, leaving its Colonel and a handful of men practically surrounded.

But Colonel Musgrave, though cornered, was far from being caught. His one chance of

escape lay in reaching some shelter where he could hold out until reënforcements reached him, and, taking it, he made a dash for the Chew Mansion immediately behind him, threw his men inside, and opened a brisk fire from the windows on his pursuers as they leaped forward out of the fog. For a moment the Americans hesitated. The gallant officer and his men were completely surrounded and could not possibly escape, so a young Virginian lieutenant was sent forward with a white flag to demand their immediate surrender. Doubtless they did not see his handkerchief, or bit of white rag, in the misty light, and before he came within hailing distance a musket in one of the upper windows flashed and the officer fell dead, clutching his flag of truce.

From that instant the fate of the whole enterprise was practically sealed, for Wayne's division, instead of leaving the building under a sufficient guard and pressing forward according to Washington's plan, determined to avenge what was regarded as the wanton murder of their comrade, and bringing up cannon they proceeded to batter the house to pieces. But the old dwelling was strongly constructed and the cannon balls made but little

impression on its stone walls. Efforts were then made to set it on fire and carry it by assault, but Colonel Musgrave and his men, realizing the temper of their assailants and the strength of their own position, heroically determined to sell their lives as dearly as possible, and the Americans who stepped out of the fog bank and within range of their muskets courted death.

Solid shot crashed through the windows and tore the doors apart; plaster and bricks flew up in dust; chimneys toppled, and the barricades of furniture were blown to splinters, but though rush after rush was made to take advantage of these openings, only one man reached the windows alive. Indeed, no less than fifty-seven Americans fell under the deadly fire that spurted from every loophole of the improvised fortress, and every victim increased the assailants' rage. The roar of this violent mimic battle was, of course, heard by the other parts of the Continental army, and before long several battalions, a brigade, and a whole division were hurriedly groping their way toward what they supposed to be the main field of action, each screened from the other by the fog.

Up to this moment success was far from impossible, for some of the divisions had already fallen upon the British and were driving them with considerable confusion back upon their supports. Indeed, a little pressure would undoubtedly have started the panic upon which Washington had counted, but the bombardment of the Chew Mansion delayed Wayne's troops, and before this could be corrected two of the brigades which were moving toward the sound of the cannonading got directly behind Wayne's division, and mistaking them for the enemy, fired point-blank into their ranks, and believing that they were being attacked from the rear, Colonel Musgrave's besiegers began a retreat.

Meanwhile the other divisions, finding themselves without support, gave way before the reënforcements which the British hurried from Philadelphia and something very like a panic struck the entire American force. For a time it seemed as though the day which had begun with such brilliant prospects would end in utter disaster, but Washington, ably seconded by Greene, soon got control of the fugitives, and when Howe started to pursue he found the Americans so skillfully posted that

he retired, well satisfied with having saved his army.

Washington thereupon withdrew his troops in good order, having lost about a thousand men, of which four hundred were taken prisoners, but having inflicted such a blow on the enemy that all thought of rescuing Burgoyne was abandoned, and within two weeks of the battle of Germantown that General and his whole army surrendered at Saratoga.

Gates promptly sent word of this great success to Congress, without troubling to notify his Commander-in-Chief, whose splendid generalship had made the victory possible, but Washington scarcely noticing the affront in his joy over the news, sent warm congratulations to the northern army and busied himself with keeping Howe penned up in Philadelphia.

For two months the British Commander was in a most uncomfortable position, for the American forts still held possession of the Delaware River and prevented the fleet from reaching the city, and it was not until those forts were taken after a desperate struggle involving great loss of life that he felt himself secure.

A FIGHT IN A FOG

By this time winter was almost at hand and Washington, having posted his army to advantage within easy reach of Philadelphia, held his adversary so closely in check that all active operations ceased for well-nigh a year.

CHAPTER XXIII

A STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

THE place which Washington had selected for his winter quarters was about as perfectly protected a spot as Nature ever devised. In front of it flowed the Schuylkill River, whose shore at this point formed a natural breastwork, and on the west it was guarded by a swift-running stream that supplied power for an iron mill known as the Valley Forge. In such a position it is probable that the army might have defied attack without intrenchments of any kind, but the men were immediately set to work with shovels, picks, and logs, and in a short time it fairly bristled with defenses. Indeed, before the army was permanently established at this point the British reconnoitered the whole neighborhood for nine miles in the hope of finding an opening, but gave it up in despair.

Valley Forge was not, however, merely a

safe haven of refuge. It was a post from which Washington could menace both Philadelphia and New York. Within twenty-five miles of Philadelphia, it was so situated that Howe could scarcely move beyond cannon range without fearing that the American army would descend on the town, and it was near enough to New York to hold Clinton, who had been left to guard that city, well within his lines. In other words, the checkerboard of war showed one piece holding two in check in such a manner that neither could be moved without opening a way to " the King row."

But, though Washington and his men could not be dislodged from Valley Forge by the enemy, they were almost driven from their stronghold during the first two months of 1778 by the neglect and mismanagement of Congress. With ordinary care and intelligence there should have been, and there was, an abundance of food and clothing for all the needs of the army, but such indifference and incompetence were displayed by those in authority that the defenders of the country were virtually left to perish of cold and hunger. This condition of affairs was largely due to the fact that the ablest representatives of the Govern-

ment had resigned their positions to serve in the army or help in the affairs of their own States. In this way the attendance at the meetings of Congress had gradually decreased, until the whole business was conducted by a mere handful of men, sometimes numbering less than a dozen, who appointed incapable officials whose ignorance and neglect threatened the army with destruction.

When Washington realized this he determined not to rely on Congress any longer, and, taking matters into his own hands, he proceeded to fight famine and cold as vigorously as he had fought the enemy. His experience as a planter now stood him in good stead, for he had had to build houses and mills, and provide for a large number of laborers in his farming days, and the knowledge he had gained in this way enabled him to make Valley Forge a habitable, if not a comfortable, encampment. Under his directions log huts were erected, prizes being offered those soldiers who built the best and neatest shelters; streets were planned and laid out, and most important of all, General Greene was persuaded to serve as Quartermaster-General and procure the necessary food and clothing.

Greene was essentially a fighting general, and the idea of abandoning all chance of glory and distinction in the field and undertaking the dull work of seeing that the troops had something to eat and wear was hateful to him. "History never heard of a Quartermaster-General!" he exclaimed in disgust, but he unselfishly laid aside his own wishes and, taking up his disagreeable duties, performed them so well that if history never heard of a Quartermaster-General before his day, it has remembered one ever since. Under his energetic management the country was scoured for provisions, all the available material for blankets and clothing was procured, and after weeks of desperate work the most pressing needs of the troops were met.

But despite his utmost exertions Washington was forced to witness frightful suffering among his men. There were no proper accommodations for the wounded, and starvation and exposure soon caused diseases that killed strong men by the score and spread illness throughout his camp, until at times there were scarcely enough men fit for duty to guard the breastworks. Nevertheless, the resolute commander struggled to keep his forces together,

sharing all their hardships and devoting himself night and day to bettering their condition. Inspired by his splendid courage and example, the soldiers bore their privations almost without murmuring, each occupant of a hut

WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS AT VALLEY FORGE AS EXISTING IN 1909.

(From a sketch by Jonathan Ring.)

contributing part of his clothing whenever one of his "bunkies" was ordered on sentry duty, and otherwise showing an unselfishness rarely equaled in the history of war. During all that cruel winter when the huts lay almost buried in snow, and the ragged sentries often froze to death at their posts, and each day was a living death, there were practically no desertions

among the native-born Americans, and comparatively few of those who were born elsewhere yielded to the temptation of seeking comfort with the enemy. No military chieftain ever received a finer tribute than this.

But while Washington was thus slowly and painfully overcoming the difficulties by which he was surrounded, he found himself confronted by a peril even more dangerous to the American cause. The small group of men who now controlled Congress began to complain that the army was useless at Valley Forge and to demand that the half-starved and almost naked troops be marched against the British in Philadelphia, and when the Commander-in-Chief refused to sacrifice his men in this way he was accused of being unwilling to fight. Members of Congress who were living in comfortable houses with very little knowledge and less thought of the sufferings which were daily being endured in camp, then commenced to compare the success of Gates with Washington's defeats at Brandywine and Germantown, and to hint that a change in the commandership of the army might be desirable.

All this was doubtless done to provoke

Washington into resigning, but he remained silent until he discovered that the man who was at the bottom of all the mischief was a discontented Irish adventurer named Conway, and that General Gates himself was secretly encouraging this underhanded business with the idea of obtaining the chief command. The fact was that Gates had by this time fully persuaded himself that the capture of Burgoyne was due entirely to his generalship, whereas no one had much less claim to a share in that success than he. Benedict Arnold had done most of the real fighting, Schuyler had managed practically the whole campaign, and Washington had kept Howe from going to the rescue. But Gates, who had taken command only a short time before the surrender, received the official credit of it, and being a weak and easily flattered man, it went to his head. He therefore began slyly working to make Congress dissatisfied with Washington and Conway, expecting to be rewarded if Gates got the command, did his best to persuade all with whom he came in contact that Washington was not a fit man for head of the army.

But even when the Commander-in-Chief knew this, he did not at once expose the plot,

fearing that a quarrel among the officers might have a bad effect on the soldiers and do far more damage to the country than all the armies of England combined. Finally, however, he tactfully allowed Gates to know that he was aware of what was going on between him and Conway, and in his alarm at being discovered Gates took refuge in a series of silly lies which showed that he was a coward as well as a sneak and placed him in a ridiculous, if not a contemptible, light. This pitiful exposure was soon followed by the resignation of Major-General Conway from the army and such a demonstration of affection for Washington as he had never before received from his fellow-countrymen.

Annoying as this petty conspiracy had been, the vigilant commander had not allowed it to interfere with the work of building up the army at Valley Forge, and to his assistance late in February, 1778, came one of the ablest officers in the Prussian army. This was Baron Steuben, who had been on the staff of Frederick the Great and who, like Lafayette, had volunteered to serve without pay or rank. Steuben had been accustomed all his life to handling highly trained and well-disciplined

troops, but he soon saw that the American privates were far more intelligent than the rank and file of European troops, and that their methods of Indian fighting could be used to great advantage if combined with a simple drill. He therefore adapted the Prussian tactics to suit his new pupils and, taking up a gun, picked out a squad of the smartest-looking men and trained them day after day until they were prepared to serve as drillmasters for their comrades. Many amusing stories are told of Steuben's struggles with his raw recruits, for he did not speak very fluent English when he first arrived, and between his own mistakes and those of his men he frequently worked himself into a frenzy of rage, and on one occasion he is said to have turned exhaustedly to a subordinate, remarking in despair, "Here, you take dem! I can swear at dem no more!"

Three months of this sort of work made a wonderful change in the army whose effectiveness was further increased by the formation of a small, but exceedingly active, cavalry corps under Major Henry Lee, who became well known to his own generation as "Light Horse Harry," and better known in later years as the

father of Robert E. Lee, one of the greatest soldiers that the world has ever known.

During the Spring of 1778 a remarkable group of young officers was assembled at Valley Forge,—" Mad Anthony " Wayne, aged thirty-three; Lafayette, aged twenty; Hamilton, aged twenty-one; " Light Horse Harry " Lee, aged twenty-two; Henry Knox, aged twenty-seven; Benedict Arnold, aged thirty-seven; to say nothing of Sullivan, Greene, De Kalb, Lord Stirling, Steuben, and Charles Lee, who had just been exchanged for an English prisoner.

Mrs. Washington, Mrs. Greene, Mrs. Knox, Mrs. Stirling, and other ladies were likewise present part of the time, and despite the rough living the company did their best to keep up their spirits with little dinners, sewing parties and entertainments of various kinds. Finally, on the first of May, when the news arrived that France had recognized the independence of the United States and made an alliance with them against Great Britain, a service of Thanksgiving was held, followed by a review of the troops, a salute of thirteen guns and a grand banquet in the open air, the officers linking arms and marching around the tables, thirteen

abreast, in honor of the union of the thirteen states.

Echoes of these rejoicings were heard by the British outposts, but no one apparently understood their meaning and Howe and his officers were enjoying themselves so hugely in Philadelphia that they did not trouble themselves much about what was going on in the camp at Valley Forge. As a matter of fact, neither General Howe nor his brother the Admiral were in sympathy with the war and they had good reason to believe that England still wished and hoped to win back the colonies by kindness rather than by force. Up to the time of the French Alliance this is probably the reason why the British did not do their utmost to crush the Revolution, and it is certainly the explanation of Howe's inactivity after the capture of Philadelphia. Never had the city known such gayety as the English officers provided in the winter of 1778, and nowhere had the visitors been more hospitably received. All the youth and beauty of the town, rebel and royal, were apparently ready to dance with the red-coated company, and Howe encouraged his subordinates in making life as merry as might be.

It was therefore with keen regret that they learned of his recall to England, and the farewell fancy dress ball and carnival, in his honor, which was largely planned by young Captain André, was probably the finest spectacle of the kind which the New World had ever seen. Indeed, the only unpleasant feature of this memorable night was a rather ominous attack on the British outposts, showing that if the Americans had not been invited to the party they had, at least, not gone to bed. But the fact was that the Americans had for some time past been proving more and more troublesome, and by this time they had become so active that the British foraging parties did not dare leave the city except under the protection of a full brigade.

Finally, Sir Henry Clinton, who succeeded Howe, realized that if he stayed in Philadelphia much longer, Washington's army, which now numbered fifteen thousand, might surround him and take the town, and he therefore determined to retire to New York at the earliest possible moment. For a while he tarried in the hope that the King's Commissioners, who had arrived in America with offers to grant all that the colonies had asked before the

war began, might succeed in securing peace, but when they failed to gain more than a respectful hearing, he busied himself in preparations for escape.

To retreat by land in the presence of Washington's powerful force was dangerous, but to attempt the journey by sea was even more so, as his opponents might reach New York before him. Moreover, if he used the fleet for his troops he would have to desert the loyal citizens who had placed themselves under his protection and were clamoring at the thought of being left behind. There was nothing to be done, therefore, but attempt an overland march; so with the American cavalry already hovering on the outskirts of the town, he started northward at dawn on June 18, 1778, and by nightfall Benedict Arnold was in charge of Philadelphia and Washington was in full pursuit of the retreating enemy.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE HUNTER HUNTED

The retreat of the British gave Washington an opportunity such as he had never had since the war began, for with prompt action there was more than a fair chance of destroying their main army. Only about eighteen months earlier he and his handful of cold and hungry men, with no baggage but knapsacks, had scurried across the freezing Jersey flat lands, barely escaping Cornwallis's eager clutch. Now the hunter was being hunted, for Clinton and Cornwallis, with the Americans at their heels, were struggling through the same country but under a broiling summer sun and a cloud of choking dust, with a baggage train nearly twelve miles long.

It required no great military genius to grasp the possibilities of this situation, but when Washington called a council of war to decide upon the best method of attack, General

Charles Lee declared himself unalterably opposed to any attack at all. The enemy was retreating—let them go and speed their going, was his astonishing advice, and his military reputation was still so highly respected in the army that the majority of the officers agreed with him.

Had Washington been of a suspicious nature this strange advice might have put him on his guard, for the situation ought to have been obvious to any soldier of Lee's experience. But though he had not forgotten the man's disobedience of orders on the retreat to the Delaware, Washington had long since forgiven it and he was, of course, utterly ignorant of the fact that Lee had, within fifteen months, actually provided Howe with a written plan of campaign against the Americans, for this damning proof of his treachery was to remain hidden for many years. Therefore, when the Commander-in-Chief, supported by Greene, Hamilton, Wayne, Lafayette, and others, decided to overrule the adverse vote and make an immediate attack, the command of the advance guard was offered to Lee, to which post his rank and age entitled him.

Then Providence kindly intervened in

favor of the American cause, for Lee, disgusted at the action of his superior, declined the command and Lafayette was immediately appointed in his place. Fortunate would it have been for Lee had his career ended with this refusal of duty in the presence of the enemy; and fortunate would it have been for both England and America. But fate willed it otherwise, for after Lafayette had started, Lee repented and asked to be reinstated, with the result that the young Marquis yielded to him at Washington's suggestion, and before the advance guard overtook the British he was once more in command.

By June 28, 1778, the English forces had reached Monmouth Court House, about halfway between Trenton and Sandy Hook, toward which they were painfully crawling, men and horses fairly gasping in the terrific heat. Indeed, some of the heavily clad soldiers died like parched cattle in attempting to satisfy their thirst at the brooks and streams, and others were sunstruck or straggled from the line of march. Yet Clinton did not dare to halt. Already the Americans were beginning to overlap his columns and threaten his line of retreat, and his officers were seriously advising

the destruction of his ponderous wagon train and a hasty flight to save the army. But the British General, although fully aware of his peril, was not yet ready for such desperate measures. Forming his troops into two divisions, he assigned one to Knyphausen, with orders to guard the baggage and push on with it to Sandy Hook with all possible speed, while he retained the other under his own command to cover the retreat.

Here was the moment for which Washington had watched and waited for well-nigh three years. With an army of almost fifteen thousand men behind him and a divided force in his front, he had only to strike with his whole strength to thrust Clinton out of his path and hurl himself on Knyphausen, encumbered by his miles of slow-moving wagon trains. But the agonizing fact was that a miscreant who had not the courage to be an open traitor, was in a position to wreck his plan. The orders which Lafayette had received on setting out were clear and positive. He was to attack the enemy and take advantage of every opening to impede and annoy them, and Lee followed with further orders to attack vigorously, with the idea of getting on Clinton's

flank and between him and Knyphausen, but in any case to keep the rear guard hotly engaged until the rest of the army could come up and drive the attack home.

Clinton, though not a brilliant soldier, had no difficulty in understanding Washington's plan when he was advised of the approach of Lee's troops. A cloud of skirmishers in linen hunting costumes, which he recognized as Morgan's rifle corps, had been bothering his men for some days and he knew from this that the American commander was not far away. He therefore saw that if Lee got between him and the rest of his army a retreat would be difficult and that his only chance lay in defeating the advance guard before Washington arrived. As a forlorn hope, he accordingly faced about, and, ordering part of Cornwallis's force to support him without waiting to be attacked, moved rapidly forward to meet his foe, many of his men falling dead from the heat long before they came within firing range. It was a bold and courageous move, but had the Americans been under other guidance, the result would probably have been disastrous, for Wayne and Lafayette were posted where they could have played havoc with the approaching

columns. Indeed, they had not fully disclosed themselves to the enemy, but were waiting to strike, when, to their amazement, Lee directed a retreat.

Astounded as they were by this order, the two young commanders obeyed, falling back to a ridge from which they supposed Lee preferred to stop the enemy's advance, but to their utter chagrin a further retreat was ordered, the puzzled regiments giving way with increasing confusion as the British approached. Up to this time scarcely a shot had been fired, but now a shower of bullets began to fall on the retreating troops, who, huddled together, had no opportunity to defend themselves. Meanwhile messengers had been hurried to Washington informing him of what was happening, and before long he was among the flying troops demanding that Lee explain the meaning of his senseless retreat.

Years of experience in the field had long since taught Washington the value of calmness and few of his officers had ever seen him show any outward signs of anger. But his eyes blazed fiercely as he listened to Lee's shuffling excuses, and as they were still being stammered forth he burst into a rage which fairly fright-

WASHINGTON RALLYING THE TROOPS AT THE BATTLE OF MONMOUTH.

June 28, 1778.

ened those about him and, brushing the culprit aside, ordered him instantly from the field. Then, with a thundered command to his staff, he dashed forward, stopped the fugitives and hastened to re-form their broken ranks. There was no time to lose, for the British, exulting in their easy victory, were pressing on with a vigor which threatened to create a panic.

But now Steuben's training effected what personal bravery alone could not have accomplished, and the men, stripping off all their superfluous clothes and responding quickly to their officers' commands, fought like veterans to regain the lost ground. Behind a group of farmhouses and under cover of fences, a swarm of unerring marksmen stopped the battalion of English Grenadiers just as they swept forward in a vigorous bayonet charge, which earlier in the war would have carried the day; Greene seized a range of hillocks and, planting his cannon to advantage, poured a deadly fire upon the shattered lines; "Mad Anthony" Wayne, in his element when danger threatened and daring was required, pushed forward with conspicuous gallantry, driving the enemy before him, and the royal cavalry were almost cut to pieces.

Washington was everywhere in the thickest of the fight. "I never saw the General to so much advantage," declared Hamilton. "America owes a great deal to him for this day's work. By his own presence he brought order out of confusion, animated his troops and led them to success." All this time the rest of the American army was pouring on to the field and fighting desperately, Clinton's troops were pushed farther and farther back until all the lost ground was regained, and a general pursuit was beginning along the whole line when darkness put an end to the struggle.

Washington thereupon ordered his men to pass the night on the battle field, just where they were, in readiness to resume the contest at daybreak, and Clinton's exhausted army lay on its arms only a few hundred rods away. Doubtless the Commander-in-Chief and his generals did not sleep much during that sweltering night, but as they lay on the ground planning for the morrow, the British were creeping away, and by sunrise the two divisions of their army were again reunited.

This was a bitter disappointment to Washington, for had Clinton not made this skillful retreat just in the nick of time, the war might

possibly have been ended with his defeat. However, there was nothing to be gained by pursuing him to Sandy Hook, where he would be supported by the fleet. So, placing Lee under arrest to face a court-martial which suspended him from the army in disgrace, Washington started his forces toward the Hudson. Then learning that a French fleet was approaching, he sent Hamilton and another officer to arrange with its commander for a joint attack on New York and, moving with his troops to White Plains, arrived there on July 20, 1778, and prepared for battle.

CHAPTER XXV

DISAPPOINTMENTS AND DEFEATS

The appearance of the French squadron under Count d'Estaing, off the port of New York, afforded the first opportunity which America and France had had for acting together against the common enemy, and the ships had arrived at a most favorable moment. Inside the harbor the British had only a few men-of-war, and outside the city Washington had a formidable army. To his bitter disappointment, however, the Commander-in-Chief soon learned that Count d'Estaing refused to join in an attack against the city, on the ground that the channel of the harbor was not deep enough to allow his vessels to enter with safety, and all hope of capturing the town instantly vanished. It was then proposed that the French should sail to Newport and assist the Americans in driving the British from that place, and Washington accordingly ordered

General Sullivan to march there, accompanied by Lafayette and a strong body of troops.

The French fleet arrived at Newport toward the last of July, 1778, and prompt action would undoubtedly have resulted in an important victory. But Sullivan and d'Estaing did not work well together from the very start, and before their preparations were completed a British fleet under Lord Howe appeared off the harbor and the French sailed out to meet it, but a wild storm soon scattered the combatants and gave them all they could do to save themselves from shipwreck. Indeed, when d'Estaing's vessels crawled back into the harbor again, they were so badly damaged that their commander insisted on taking them to Boston for repairs, without waiting to finish the task which he and Sullivan had begun. The American officers indignantly protested that this would ruin the whole expedition, as they had not brought sufficient troops to attack the enemy unassisted, and Lafayette urged his countrymen to wait, but all arguments were in vain. The Frenchmen thereupon sailed away; the British attacked Sullivan's little army as soon as they saw it was deserted, and the campaign ended in an inglorious retreat.

This second failure to give any practical assistance disgusted and enraged the Americans, and for a time they despised the French almost as cordially as they did the Hessians. Everyone understood that it was not love for America but hatred of England which had induced the French King to offer his assistance, and such was the popular resentment against d'Estaing that had it not been for Washington's tactful interference, the alliance with France would have come to an end then and there. Even as it was, some of the French sailors were killed by a mob before the authorities controlled the situation, and it was many a long day before the two countries attempted to act together again.

Meanwhile Lafayette returned to France to visit his family and endeavor to persuade his government to send more effective aid to the United States, and Washington, with his army securely posted at White Plains and at other points around New York, had to content himself with guarding the Hudson and holding the British practically within the city. This he did for almost a year, but late in the Spring of 1779 Clinton made an effort to break his opponent's grip by moving up the Hudson and

capturing Stony Point, within a few miles of West Point, the strongest American fortress on the river. Washington instantly saw the danger of this move, and under his orders Wayne stormed and retook the place at the point of the bayonet, making the entire garrison prisoners, and a little later " Light Horse Harry " Lee moved down to Paulus Hook, the site of the present Jersey City, and, surprising the British fort at that point, captured it with a goodly part of its defenders. This was apparently sufficient to convince Clinton that he could not dislodge his opponent, and he remained quietly within his own lines for the remainder of the year.

But though there was no activity in the field, Washington had a constant struggle to keep his army properly clothed and fed, for Congress continued to neglect its duties and all its business speedily fell into much the same condition as had existed during the winter at Valley Forge. Moreover, to make matters worse, the authorities in Philadelphia started a serious dispute with General Benedict Arnold. Arnold was still suffering from a severe wound which he had received during his brilliant campaign against Burgoyne, and not be-

ing yet in fit condition to resume his duties in the field, Washington had placed him in command of the city on the withdrawal of the British. Here his friendship for some of the Tory residents, and his engagement to Miss Margaret Shippen, the daughter of a loyalist, soon gave offense to many of the patriotic but narrow-minded and prejudiced local officials and they expressed their opinion of his conduct in no uncertain terms.

Arnold hotly resented this criticism, and his high temper speedily led to a bitter dispute, with the result that certain officials with whom he had quarreled took advantage of the situation to vent their petty spite by bringing charges against him and persecuting him by every means which malice could invent. Even when the gallant hero of Saratoga was triumphantly acquitted by the Committee of Investigation, appointed by Congress, they tried to rob him of his vindication by ordering him court-martialed, and then denying him the right to a speedy hearing by postponements and delays which mocked justice and discredited the whole proceedings.

This sorry business dragged on during most of the year 1779, and though Washington

deplored it and sympathized with Arnold, he was unable to interfere. Finally, when the court-martial exonerated the accused officer, but absurdly demanded that he be publicly reprimanded for two trivial, technical offenses, the Commander-in-Chief so worded his official reproof that it was an honor rather than a disgrace. But this was very little comfort to Arnold, who, from that time on, brooded over his wrongs and, bitterly hating his persecutors, resolved to avenge himself upon them, no matter what it cost.

The year 1780 thus opened badly for the American cause, and before long disasters began to multiply. Late in December of the previous year Clinton had accompanied Cornwallis to invade South Carolina, and the Southern States, which had until that time practically escaped the ravages of war, now experienced all the horrors of a civil conflict, for there were almost as many royalists as there were rebels in the South, and neighbors, and even relatives, fought savagely against each other.

The American forces in South Carolina were commanded by General Lincoln, and by May, 1780, he was maneuvered into a bad posi-

tion at Charleston and captured with his whole army. Then Congress, in June, appointed Gates as his successor, against Washington's wishes and advice, and by August he had been so shamefully routed at the battle of Camden that his reputation as a general was ruined. Indeed, he fled from the field with such haste on that occasion that he left his army miles behind him, with the result that he was openly accused of cowardice and held in derision and contempt. Thus ended the career of the man who had taken all the credit of Burgoyne's surrender from those who deserved it, and had plotted to deprive Washington of the chief command.

Meanwhile Lafayette had returned from France with the cheering news that a strong army and fleet would soon be placed at the service of the Americans, but when General Rochambeau arrived at Newport in July, 1780, with the first installment of this promised reënforcement, he refused to move until the rest of his men arrived, and it was soon apparent that they never would arrive. Before he learned, however, that they were bottled up by a British squadron in a French port, another English fleet blocked him in Newport, and for

the third time, the allies failed to render any practical assistance.

It was at this crisis that General Arnold requested Washington to give him command of West Point, the key to the American position on the Hudson, and upon the Commander-in-Chief's ready compliance with that request the darkest hour of the Revolution dawned.

CHAPTER XXVI

A DESPERATE PERIL

Washington doubtless rejoiced at Arnold's arrival on the Hudson. Almost from the beginning of the war he had looked upon him as one of the ablest generals under his command, and during the years that had intervened their acquaintance had ripened into warm personal friendship. To feel that West Point was in such safe hands, therefore, relieved the Commander-in-Chief of one of his anxieties at a time when the burden of his responsibilities was becoming almost more than any one man could bear. Indeed, Washington and his army were about all that remained of the Revolution after the disasters in the South, for Congress had lost all energy and the people were plainly tiring of a contest which had already lasted four years and seemed as though it would never end. Business was practically at a standstill, and Ameri-

can paper money had become so useless that a hat cost about a thousand Continental dollars, and the phrase "not worth a Continental" expressed the popular contempt of its value.

Against this indifference, nervelessness, and general languor Washington contended with all the dauntless courage of a master of men. When hope died out in one direction he resolutely sought it in another; when Congress sank into helplessness he fairly shook the representatives of the Government into action, and persisted in his demands until he shamed or otherwise forced them to provide for the soldiers in the field, and keep the country in a state of defense. With tireless energy and inexhaustible patience he worked day after day at the seemingly hopeless task of holding the crumbling Government together, and, in spite of all obstacles, he did things or got them done when everyone else despaired. Indeed, the hundreds upon hundreds of letters which poured from his pen at this critical period go far to demonstrate that he was the only real governing force in the country, and had he been killed or captured during 1780 or 1781, it is hardly probable that the Revolution would have survived a day.

The amount of work which he performed during those years is simply marvelous; its variety is almost beyond belief. But in the mass of his correspondence, which has been preserved, dealing with army supplies, campaign plans, politics, diplomacy, finance, and countless other subjects, there are quiet, homelike letters giving directions for the management of Mount Vernon, and bearing messages to his loved ones—all written with scarcely a sign of haste. Those who complain that they have not time to do what they ought to do, should read a few volumes of Washington's letters and note what he accomplished with no more hours at his command than other people have.

With such a pressure of work upon him, it is no wonder then that the Commander-in-Chief welcomed the presence of a trusted officer like Arnold. The disasters in the South and the increasing weariness of the whole country warned him that something must be done to relieve the situation. He had, therefore, long been anxious to consult with the French General Rochambeau and plan a campaign against New York, with the idea of capturing that city, or at least of forcing Corn-

wallis to leave the South and come to its rescue. But to travel to Newport, where Rochambeau was stationed, would consume some time, and if the enemy were to learn of his absence and take advantage of it, he felt that he would be justly criticised for not being on the spot. With Arnold at hand, however, he felt more secure, and he therefore requested Rochambeau to meet him halfway at Hartford, and started for that city on September 18, 1780.

Meanwhile Arnold had been steadily nursing his grievances against his enemies in Congress, and his plans had so far taken shape that he had written letters to Clinton, under an assumed name, advising him that an American officer of high rank was ready to help the British end the war if he could be assured of sufficient reward. For a time Clinton could not believe that the writer of this letter was Arnold, but when he became convinced of this, arrangements were made to reward him with a generalship in the British army and a large sum of money, provided he could guarantee the capture of West Point. But with Washington watching him this was more than the traitor could do, so for weeks he waited, seek-

ing a favorable opportunity to carry his plans into effect.

His delight at Washington's departure, therefore, may well be imagined. This was just the chance for which he had been longing, and his commander's back was scarcely turned before he hurried a despatch to Clinton, advising him to perfect the details of the plan without a moment's delay. The British commander promptly responded by ordering his Adjutant-General, André, to proceed up the Hudson on the *Vulture* as far as that war vessel could go, giving him full authority to meet the traitor and make whatever arrangements were necessary.

André was one of the most popular young officers in the British army, and his handsome face and charming manners had won him many friends in Philadelphia, to whose pleasure he had greatly added during his stay in that city. Indeed, Arnold's wife, who was then the reigning belle of the town, had often been his partner in the dinners and balls which distinguished that gay winter. In those days he had merely been a Captain, but now he was a Major, and the Adjutant-General of the army, and as such he was entirely in Clinton's

confidence, and under the name of John Anderson he had written all the answers which the traitor had received. His commander, therefore, merely instructed him to complete the business, at the same time warning him not to enter the American lines or carry papers or disguise himself in any way.

André accordingly started on his mission, and two days after Washington's departure he sailed up the Hudson, landed at night a few miles below Stony Point and, meeting Arnold in a neighboring wood, listened to the traitor's plans. By dawn the conspirators were still perfecting the details of their plot, and the boatmen who had taken André ashore, refusing to take him back after sunrise, he and Arnold were compelled to take refuge in a house owned by a man named Joshua Smith, well within the American lines. They had scarcely gained this shelter, however, when a most alarming sound of cannonading reached their ears, and springing to the windows they perceived that one of the American shore batteries had opened fire on the *Vulture* and that that vessel was rapidly dropping down the river to get out of range. Aghast as he was at this discovery, André knew that the ship had

orders not to return to New York without him, and, feeling sure that she would not go far, he arranged with Arnold to have Smith row him out to the sloop-of-war as soon as night came on.

Meanwhile the two conspirators arranged their plot in greater detail, and André secured a number of papers in Arnold's handwriting, giving the plans of the fort and other information. It was further agreed that Arnold should pretend to repair the chain which was stretched across the river to prevent the passage of vessels and, removing some of its middle links, tie the ends together with a light rope which any war ship could easily break, and that he should also so post the troops that West Point would be defenseless.

The capture of the fortress being thus assured, the traitor then departed, but by nightfall André's guide lost his courage and declined to trust himself in front of the American batteries. It would be far safer, he declared, to cross the river and travel down the other side on horseback. André did not like this plan, for his British uniform, which would attract no attention in a boat at night, could not be worn on the overland trip, and his

papers, which he had intended to weight with a stone, ready to sink in the water if necessary, could not be so easily destroyed if he adopted Smith's advice. However, Arnold had provided him with passes for either land or water and, rather than lose any more time, he agreed to follow his guide, and, partially disguising himself in some of Smith's clothes and stowing his papers in his shoes, he crossed the river and started southward on the night of September 22d.

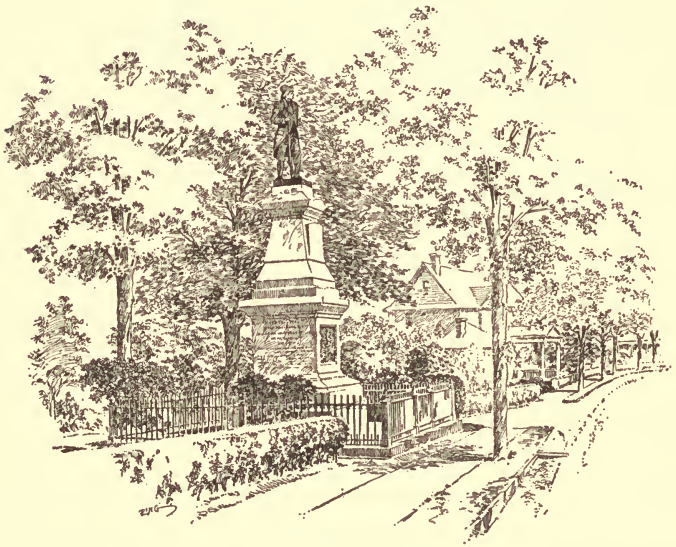
How much, or how little, Smith knew concerning his companion is uncertain, but he soon proved himself a very cautious person, and before many miles had been covered he halted, declaring there were too many "Cowboys" and "Skinners" about to make night traveling safe. André knew all about the "Cowboys," a lawless band of robbers who infested Westchester County, pretending to favor the British, and he had doubtless heard of the "Skinners," the highwaymen who posed as American soldiers, but he was utterly disgusted with Smith's timidity, and after an anxious night at a wayside house, he insisted upon pushing forward without further delay. But Smith still continued nervous, and the

young officer, becoming exasperated at the waste of precious time, decided to shift for himself.

Dismissing his guide, therefore, he hurried on toward Tarrytown, feeling that his adventures were almost at an end and that he would soon be safely within the British lines. He had not progressed far, however, before three shabbily dressed fellows sprang from a thicket by the roadside and leveling their muskets, commanded him to halt. Startled as he must have been, André behaved with great coolness, and observing, as he reined in his horse, that one of the party wore a Hessian coat, he inquired if they were supporters "of the lower (loyal) party," and was told that they were. Thereupon he announced that he was a British officer who was traveling on important business which would not admit of a moment's delay; but the words had scarcely fallen from his lips when he was informed that the men were Americans and that he was their prisoner.

Dangerous as the situation was, André did not yet despair of effecting his escape, and feeling certain that his captors must be "Skinners," who would let him go as soon as they

had robbed him of all his valuables, he showed them Arnold's pass and offered them his watch and purse to let him proceed at once. Had the men been " Skinners " this would doubtless



MONUMENT MARKING SPOT WHERE ANDRÉ WAS CAPTURED NEAR TARRYTOWN, N. Y.
(From a sketch by Jonathan Ring.)

have satisfied them, but being loyal Americans it sounded like a bribe and from that instant André's fate was sealed, for they straightway searched him and, finding the papers in his shoes, marched him to the nearest outpost.

Here the commander, Colonel Jameson, examined the papers, but not believing that Arnold could have anything to do with them, he ordered the prisoner taken to West Point and despatched the documents to Washington.

André's relief at this turn of affairs may well be imagined, for once in Arnold's hands he was safe, and there would be plenty of time to escape before the plot was exposed. But, unfortunately for these hopes, another officer now arrived on the scene. This was Major Benjamin Tallmadge, a graduate of Yale and, strange to say, a classmate of Nathan Hale, and the moment he read the papers he urged Colonel Jameson to hold André and give no report to Arnold until further orders from Washington. Jameson partially took this advice, for he hurried out a squad of cavalry who overtook André and his escort on the road and ordered them to halt where they were, but he sent a despatch to Arnold informing him that a man calling himself John Anderson had been captured carrying suspicious papers in his shoes.

Meanwhile the other messenger with the proofs of Arnold's guilt was galloping to Hartford, and had Washington stayed there as long

as he had intended the papers would have speedily reached his hands. He had, however, soon learned from Rochambeau that the French were in no condition to join in the proposed campaign against Clinton and that further consultation would be a waste of time. Therefore, as Jameson's messenger was hurrying to Hartford, the Commander-in-Chief was traveling in the opposite direction, and having taken different roads they passed each other on the way. Still, Washington was approaching West Point three days earlier than he was expected, and when he reached Fishkill on September 24th, he stopped at the very inn where Joshua Smith (André's ex-guide) was staying, and actually had a conversation with the man. The next day he moved down the river early and stopped with Knox to inspect some earthworks, while Hamilton and another officer crossed to Arnold's headquarters at the Robinson House, nearly opposite West Point, to advise him that the General was on his way to breakfast with him.

This unwelcome news must have been highly disturbing to the traitor, but knowing nothing of André's capture, he still felt that his plans were certain to succeed, for Washington

would hardly have time to discover the defenseless condition of the fortress before the British attacked as this event was scheduled for that very day. But while he and Mrs. Arnold sat at the breakfast table with their guests, momentarily expecting Washington and Knox, a despatch-bearer arrived and handed a letter to Arnold. It was Jameson's message that a certain John Anderson was in his hands.

Arnold was talking as he opened the letter, but he stopped when his eyes fell on its contents, and then quietly folding it and putting it in his pocket, he continued his sentence just where he had been interrupted. With the same cool self-control he carelessly observed that he was summoned to West Point but would be back directly, and bidding his guests excuse him, he left the room. Once outside the door, however, he darted upstairs, told his wife, who had followed him, that he was a lost man, laid her fainting on a bed, hurried to the water front, leaped into his barge and ordered the oarsmen to row for their lives down the river, where, after an eighteen-mile pull, he found the *Vulture* and was received on board to tell his sorry tale.

Meanwhile Washington arrived at Arnold's headquarters and, learning that he had been called to West Point, immediately turned to follow him. At the fort, however, he was informed that the General had not appeared, and the puzzled Commander-in-Chief once more sought him at his residence. Meantime the despatch rider, who had journeyed all the way to Hartford and back, had dashed up, and Hamilton held the proof of Arnold's guilt in his hands when his superior again approached the house.

One glance at the documents was sufficient to disclose the terrible truth. But, shocked and grieved as he was, Washington wasted no time in idle words. The situation was critical and he instantly controlled it. A sharp order to Hamilton to pursue and capture Arnold; quick, clear commands to his Aides to put all officers on their guard against a surprise; a swift, calm inspection of West Point, and an instant rearrangement of all the troops defending it; a tense, heartbroken whisper, "Whom can we trust now?"—and Washington was ready, sword in hand, for all the enemies of his country.

Four days later André was tried by a mili-

tary commission and sentenced to death as a spy, Greene, Lafayette, Steuben, and other distinguished officers acting as his judges. Great efforts were made to save his life, but the fact that he had been found within the American lines, partially disguised and bearing information to the enemy, made a defense difficult. Washington accordingly refused to set aside the unanimous verdict of the court and the young man died displaying the same courage and calmness that Nathan Hale had displayed only a few years before. To his worth as a man and a soldier the Commander-in-Chief paid his token of respect, but Arnold's name he never willingly allowed to cross his lips again.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST YORKTOWN

Shortly after Arnold fled to the British, the first cheering news which had been received from the South since Cornwallis had invaded it reached Washington, for the Americans achieved a considerable success at the battle of King's Mountain, North Carolina in October, 1780. It was not a very wonderful victory, but it proved a turning point in the war, for Gates having retired, Congress authorized Washington to appoint his successor, and he immediately selected Nathanael Greene, sending him all the troops which could possibly be spared from the North. This was the reward for which Greene had been patiently waiting. Year after year he had faithfully labored as Quartermaster-General of the army, a most distasteful and tiresome duty, but now his chance had come and he resolved to make the most of it. Indeed, the whole situation in the

South began to change almost from the moment he arrived upon the scene, and in a masterly campaign of less than four months' duration he so thoroughly outmaneuvered his opponents that early in the Spring of 1781 Cornwallis was forced from the Carolinas and retired to try his fortunes in Virginia.

Meanwhile Washington had been continuing his desperate struggle to hold the army together on the Hudson. It was a wretchedly familiar business, but he kept at it with grim determination, and by unceasing exertions he managed to instill enough life and energy into Congress to keep his troops in the field. For a time, however, it seemed as though the end had come, for so badly were the men fed and clothed, that some of the Pennsylvania troops actually mutinied, and it was with the greatest difficulty that they were finally persuaded by the State officials to return to their duties. But this dangerous episode had the effect of arousing Congress to the necessity of affording some relief, and when another mutiny broke out—this time, among the New Jersey troops—Washington was in a position to maintain discipline, and he did it with such promptness

and severity that no further disturbances occurred.

Thus the winter of 1781 passed away, and when Spring came, with the news that the British were overrunning his own State, burning and plundering almost at will, the Commander-in-Chief was sorely tempted to go to the rescue, but knowing that the defense of the Hudson was far more important than the protection of Virginia, he remained where he was. Even when he heard that the enemy were close to Mount Vernon, and he expected at any time to receive word that his dearly loved home had been destroyed, he resisted the inclination to help his own people at the expense of the nation. Indeed, when he learned that Mount Vernon had been saved by one of his relatives who supplied the British officers with provisions and afforded them other courtesies, he wrote an indignant letter to his kinsman declaring that he would rather the house had been burned and the plantation ruined than that any representative of his should have shown favor to the enemy, or sought their protection. The fortunes of war had brought the foe to his gates and he was ready and willing to share the misfortunes of his fellow-country-

men without claiming or desiring any privileges which were not extended to all the people.

For a time the British were practically unopposed in Virginia, but when the traitor Arnold was sent there, Washington ordered Lafayette to watch and check him as far as possible. But before long, Cornwallis appeared with reënforcements and the young French commander could do but little for several weeks but delay the movements of the enemy. Even when he was joined by Wayne and Steuben, the British far outnumbered him, but he boldly attacked them at Green Springs, and although his little army was repulsed, it kept at the enemy's heels, and do what he would, Cornwallis could not shake it off. Washington was well aware, however, that unless something was done to call the British away from the South they would soon collect a force which would sweep the whole country, and all that Greene had gained would speedily be lost. He therefore held a conference with Rochambeau at Wethersfield, Connecticut, toward the end of May, 1781, and arranged with him for such a determined attack upon New York that the enemy would

be forced to withdraw its troops from the South, and Greene would be able to reap the fruits of his victories.

Here again, as at Brandywine and Germantown, Washington was not attempting to make a brilliant stroke which would win applause or fame for himself alone. He was willing to have his own attack fail if he could relieve the pressure on another part of his line. He believed in unselfish team work, and never once did he attempt to score a personal triumph at the expense of his fellow-commanders. The success of any attack on New York, however, depended very largely upon the assistance of the French fleet under the Count de Grasse, which was then in the West Indies, and Washington and Rochambeau joined in sending its commander an urgent request to bring his ships North and blockade the harbor, while their troops attacked the city from the land side. If de Grasse would not do this, Washington begged him to take his ships to Virginia, and during the next twelve weeks, while his reply was being anxiously awaited, the wisdom of this latter plan became more and more evident.

To be ready for either emergency Rocham-

beau agreed to bring his troops to the Hudson, and, starting from Newport on June 9th, he marched his men, who up to this time had been of no practical service, through Providence, Hartford, Farmington, and Bedford, to North Castle and Dobb's Ferry, where he made a junction with the Americans by about July 1st. Anticipating this, Washington ordered a small force from each army to advance and attempt to surprise the outlying British forts near King's Bridge, close to the city. This attack failed, but it served to alarm Clinton, and really had a far greater effect on the campaign than anyone then imagined, while the armed reconnoisances and similar preparations for an attack which followed made him still more apprehensive. Meanwhile the combined French and American forces fell back, and by July 6th they went into camp near Dobb's Ferry.

Some few weeks later word was received from Lafayette that Cornwallis had moved to Yorktown, on the York River, Virginia, close to Chesapeake Bay, and almost at the same moment the long-expected despatch arrived from de Grasse, advising Washington that he was just on the point of sailing for Chesapeake

Bay. The instant he received this news the American commander realized that his chance had come. Cornwallis had evidently brought his army to Yorktown that it might coöperate with a British fleet in the Chesapeake, and by good luck de Grasse was heading directly for this very spot. A bold, swift stroke might now end the war, and the plan which Washington immediately put in operation was daring to a really perilous degree.

Up to this point all the movements of the French and Americans had convinced Clinton that an attack would soon be made against New York. Never for a moment did he imagine that his opponent would dare leave the Hudson unguarded and throw his whole army against Cornwallis. The risk of losing West Point and the difficulty of covering the hundreds of miles that lay between New York and Yorktown seemed to forbid any such maneuver. Nevertheless, this was precisely what Washington intended to do, and within a few days after the receipt of de Grasse's message he was hurrying southward with every man he could possibly spare.

Secrecy and speed were essential to success, for if Clinton discovered what was hap-

pening, he would undoubtedly try to throw his army between Cornwallis and the Americans, and even though he failed in stopping them he could easily delay their march until the British force at Yorktown had time to escape. Washington, therefore, took extraordinary

ROCHAMBEAU'S HEADQUARTERS NEAR ARDSLEY, N. Y., AS EXISTING IN 1909.
(From a sketch by Jonathan Ring.)

care to conceal his plans, not only from his foes but also from his friends. Indeed, Rochambeau was the only officer who knew where the men were being headed as they hurried through New Jersey, and so cleverly was their route selected, that even when Clinton learned of their march he still believed that

the Americans, having failed in the attempt on his rear door near King's Bridge, were about to swing around and try to get in at the front door from Staten Island or Sandy Hook.

This was just what Washington wanted him to think, and to deceive him still further, camp kitchens were erected along the expected line of march and the troops were so handled that they seemed to be moving straight to an attack on New York. But at the proper moment they were suddenly turned southward at a pace that defied pursuit, and before the true situation dawned on the British commander they were almost at the Delaware River. But though he had by this time acquired a fairly safe lead, Washington did not slacken his speed, and with a roar of cheers from the now excited populace, the dusty columns were soon pouring through Philadelphia, the American commander pushing on ahead to Chester, and sending back word that de Grasse had arrived in Chesapeake Bay and that not a moment must be lost.

Clinton then made a frantic effort to save the day by sending Arnold to attack some of the New England towns, thinking that the American commander might hurry back to

their rescue. But Washington was first and foremost a man of a good, hard common sense, and he knew that all Arnold could accomplish would be the destruction of a few defenseless towns, and to let Cornwallis escape in order to protect them did not appeal to his practical mind at all. He therefore paid no attention to the traitor's movements, but bent all his efforts on speeding his army southward. At Chesapeake Bay an exasperating delay occurred, for there were not sufficient vessels to transport the army over the water, and for a time the success of the whole expedition was threatened. But Washington was in no mood to be blocked by obstacles of this sort. If his troops could not be ferried down the Bay, they must march around it, and march many of them did, their General obtaining the first glimpse he had had in six years of his beloved Mount Vernon as he swept by, and on September 28, 1781, his whole force was in front of Yorktown, with success fairly within its grasp.

Meanwhile de Grasse's fleet had fiercely assailed a British squadron which had been sent to the rescue, and after a sharp engagement the French had been able to return to

the Bay while the British vessels were obliged to retire to New York, leaving Cornwallis with the York River on one side of him, the James River on the other, and the Chesapeake Bay at his back, but no ships to carry him to safety. Only one chance of escape now remained, and that was to hurl his whole army through the narrow neck of land immediately in front of him and beat a hasty retreat to the south. But Washington had anticipated this desperate move by positive instructions to Lafayette and acting upon them the young Marquis rushed a body of French troops from the fleet into the gap, and the arrival of the American army completely blocked it.

But, though the enemy was now in his clutch, Washington lost no time in tightening his hold, for de Grasse declared that his orders would not allow him to tarry much longer in the Chesapeake, and the failure of the other attempts to work with the French warned him to take no risks on this occasion. He therefore instantly set the troops at work with pickaxes and shovels throwing up intrenchments, behind which they crept nearer and nearer the imprisoned garrison, and he kept them at their tasks night and day, supervising every detail

of the siege and organizing the labor with such method that not a second of time nor an ounce of strength was wasted.

Finally, on October 14th—just sixteen days after the combined armies had arrived on the scene—the Commander-in-Chief determined to hurry matters still further by carrying two of the enemy's outer works by assault, and Hamilton was assigned to lead the Americans and Colonel de Deuxponts the French. A brilliant charge followed and Washington and Rochambeau, closely watching the movement, saw the Americans scale one of the redoubts and capture it within ten minutes, while the French soon followed with equal success. From these two commanding positions a perfect storm of shot and shell was then loosed against the British fortifications, but still Cornwallis would not yield. Indeed, he made an heroic attempt to break through the lines on the following night, and actually succeeded in spiking some of the French cannon before he was driven back; and again on the next night he made a desperate effort to escape by water only to be foiled by a terrific storm. By this time, however, his defenses were practically battered to the ground and the town be-

hind them was rapidly tumbling to pieces beneath the fire of more than fifty guns.

In the face of this terrific bombardment further resistance was useless, and at ten o'clock on the morning of October 17, 1781—exactly four years after the surrender of Burgoyne—a red-coated drummer boy mounted one of the crumbling ramparts and beside him appeared an officer with a white flag. Instantly the firing ceased and an American officer approaching, the flag bearer was blindfolded and conducted to Washington. The message he bore was a proposition for surrender and a request that hostilities be suspended for twenty-four hours. But to this Washington would not consent. Two hours was all he would grant for arranging the terms of surrender. To this Cornwallis yielded, but his first propositions were promptly rejected by Washington, and it was not until eleven at night that all the details were finally agreed upon, and Cornwallis, with over eight thousand officers and men, became prisoners of war.

Two days later the British marched from their intrenchments, their bands playing a quaint old English tune, called " The World

Turned Upside Down," and, passing between the French and American troops drawn up in line to receive them, laid down their arms. At the head of the victorious columns rode Washington, Hamilton, Knox, Steuben, Lafayette, Rochambeau, Lincoln, and many other officers, but the British commander, being ill, was not present in person, and when his representative, General O'Hara, tendered his superior's sword to Washington, the Commander-in-Chief allowed General Lincoln, who had once been Cornwallis's prisoner, to receive it, and that officer, merely taking it in his hand for a moment, instantly returned it.

Meanwhile horsemen were flying in all directions with the joyful tidings, and within a week the whole country was blazing with enthusiasm, while Washington was calmly planning to finish the work at which he had set his hand.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HOME TRIUMPHS

It was fortunate that Washington lost no time in compelling Cornwallis to surrender, for a few days after the British troops laid down their arms, Sir Henry Clinton reached Chesapeake Bay with strong reënforcements, and had the capitulation not already occurred, it is possible that he might have rescued the besieged garrison. As it was, he speedily sailed back to New York, and Washington immediately urged de Grasse to join him in an attack upon Charleston, South Carolina, and thus end the campaign with the capture of the only other important British stronghold in the South.

But the reply of the French Admiral showed that the Americans were lucky to have kept his fleet as long as they had. Indeed, if the siege of Yorktown had lasted another ten days, it is probable that de Grasse would have

sailed away and let Cornwallis escape. At all events, he refused to finish the campaign as Washington suggested, and his prompt departure forced the American commander to abandon his well-laid plans for further victories. There was nothing to be gained, therefore, by retaining the army in Virginia, and the American troops were accordingly marched back to the Hudson, while the French forces under Rochambeau were held to await further orders.

Meanwhile Washington had been summoned to Eltham, Virginia, by the serious illness of his stepson, Jack Custis, where he arrived only a short time before the young man died, leaving a wife and four children. His death was a great grief to Washington, who had always regarded him as his own son, and this sad event drove all thoughts of the success at Yorktown from his mind. Public duties, however, soon called him away and, arranging that Mrs. Washington should take the two youngest Custis children to Mount Vernon, he made a brief stay at his old home and hurried on to Philadelphia, where he remained for four months consulting with Congress and preparing another plan of campaign.

But no new campaign was destined to be fought, for within six months word was received from England that the British Parliament was inclined to make peace and acknowledge the independence of America, and that the King's ministers who desired to continue the war would soon resign their posts. Sincerely as he hoped for such a result, Washington knew that the best way to accomplish it was to prove that America was well prepared for war, and with that idea he made every effort to keep his army ready for active service. But by this time the troops, who had received no pay for many a long month, were beginning to suspect that they would never obtain what was due them if the war closed, and with every sign of approaching peace their discontent deepened. Washington did his best to check this growing dissatisfaction, assuring the soldiers that Congress would certainly provide for the payment of all their just claims, but in May, 1782, he received a most astonishing letter which proved that the officers as well as the men were in a dangerous mood and that the situation was altogether far more serious than he had supposed.

This letter, which was written by Colonel

Lewis Nicola, a trusted officer and friend, advised him that the army was thoroughly disgusted with Congress and the existing form of government and that a king was needed in America, and that that king must be the Commander-in-Chief. Washington was at his headquarters at Newburg when he received this remarkable document, and he immediately wrote the following reply:

"Sir: With a mixture of great surprise and astonishment I have read . . . the sentiments you have submitted. Be assured, Sir, no occurrence in the course of the war has given me more painful sensations. . . . For the present the communication of them will rest in my own bosom unless some further agitation of the matter shall make a disclosure necessary. I am much at a loss to conceive what part of my conduct could have given encouragement to an address which to me seems big with the greatest mischiefs, that can befall my country. If I am not deceived in the knowledge of myself you could not have found a person to whom your schemes are more disagreeable. . . . Let me conjure you, then, if you have any regard for your country, concern for yourself or

posterity, or respect for me, to banish these thoughts from your mind and never communicate, as from yourself or anyone else, a sentiment of the like nature."

This stern, quiet, and dignified response instantly disposed of the offensive proposition and no other suggestion of making Washington a king was ever heard of again. Nevertheless, the restlessness of the army continued to increase, and ten months after Nicola's letter was written a meeting of almost all the prominent officers in the army was called to agree upon some means of forcing Congress to terms. But again Washington interposed, and summoning the officers, persuaded them to wait patiently and trust their fellow-countrymen to see that they received fair treatment. Probably no one else could have prevented a disastrous clash between Congress and the army at this crisis. Had he been a selfish man, who desired to make himself the supreme power in the land, he needed only to have spoken the word and his troops would have swept him into any place of authority he desired. No force existed in the country which could have opposed the army, and the people,

wearied of the war and disgusted with the existing government, would undoubtedly have welcomed such a ruler as the Commander-in-Chief.

Thus the destiny of the country was absolutely in Washington's hands, and he knew that if he did not take advantage of the situation there was grave danger that some other less conscientious person might do so. But it was not to gratify his own ambition or to advance the interests of any other individual that he had unsheathed his sword. He had battled to win freedom for America and to make it a self-governing nation, and he intended to fight with this purpose to the end. "I have grown gray in your service," he told his officers when they had assembled before him; and then with great force and dignity he denounced all the schemes for advancing the interest of the army at the expense of the country as unworthy of men who had imperiled their lives and liberties in a great cause, and as he closed with a touching appeal to their honor and patriotism, many of his hearers are said to have turned away to hide their tears.

It is usual to think of Washington as a great and successful military leader, who in-

spired his soldiers and upheld the cause of freedom by a series of splendid victories in the field. But as a matter of fact, he achieved only four notable successes during all the seven years of the Revolution; namely, at Boston, Trenton, Princeton, and Yorktown. He had fought a losing, or at least an uphill fight almost from the very outset of his career; he had been defeated again and again; he had repeatedly sacrificed his own chances of success for the benefit of others; he had remained inactive for months, and even years, when others were impatient for rash enterprises, and his campaigns as a whole had displayed far more caution than brilliancy. Assuredly it was not by his military talents alone, or even largely, that Washington commanded the hearts and minds of men. But from the moment he announced his intention of serving the country without pay or reward of any kind, he had devoted himself unselfishly to the public service, with the one idea of making the United States a nation worthy of the name, and all who came in contact with him knew that he had no other end in view.

The man who is really working for others and not for himself is easily recognized. There

are very few such men, but their reward is the confidence of a whole people, and this Washington received. Men believed in him; they trusted his word; they relied on his honor; they saw he had no thought of self. When " wild tongues were loosed " he was silent and

WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS AT NEWBURG, N. Y., AS EXISTING IN 1909.
(From a sketch by Jonathan Ring.)

thought before he spoke. But having thought, he was not afraid to voice his opinion, though all the world was arrayed against him, and when the group of determined officers yielded to the wishes of their chief at Newburg on March 15, 1783, Washington achieved what was perhaps the greatest triumph of his life.

Within ten days of this momentous meeting tidings arrived that a general treaty of peace had been signed, bringing the war to an end, and the proclamation by which this joyous news was announced to the army was published on April 19, 1783, exactly eight years after the battle of Lexington.

Washington soon commenced negotiations with Sir Guy Carleton, who had succeeded Sir Henry Clinton as commander, at New York, for the surrender of that city, and preparations were begun for disbanding the American army. Indeed, the soldiers were gradually returning to their homes during the whole of the summer of 1783, and by the time the British were ready to leave New York only a handful of American troops remained under arms. A few companies of infantry, cavalry, and artillery were still in service, however, and about November 20th Washington moved down from West Point to Harlem and prepared to take possession of the city from which he had retreated seven years earlier. The rear guard of the British began retiring to Staten Island on November 25, 1783, and on the same day the representatives of the Continental army entered the city in triumph, passing down the

Bowery to Wall Street and through that historic highway to Broadway, where they halted near Trinity Church. Washington and his

"THE LONG ROOM" IN FRAUNCES'S TAVERN, NEW YORK CITY, WHERE WASHINGTON BADE FAREWELL TO HIS OFFICERS, AS EXISTING IN 1909.
(From a sketch by Jonathan Ring.)

staff soon followed, and that night a great banquet was given in his honor.

Nine days later a distinguished group of officers gathered in Fraunces's Tavern to bid farewell to their chief. Around "the long room" in that historic inn, which still remains much as it then was, stood many of the men who had fought and suffered with him during

all his hard campaigns. It was a scene which might have affected any man to tears and Washington was not ashamed to show his feeling. Face to face with those who had devotedly served him year after year in defense of the country, and with memories of their friendship and loyalty crowding upon him, he stood silent for a while not daring to trust himself to words. At last, mastering his emotion and speaking quietly and simply, but with deep feeling, he thanked his comrades for their support, congratulated the country on its success, and then taking each man by the hand, bade him an affectionate adieu. From the tavern all the officers accompanied him to the barge which awaited him at the river front, and as he stepped on board and lifted his hat in answer to their silent salute, Washington's military career practically ended.

At Philadelphia he stopped to settle his accounts with the Government, which were easily adjusted, for he had kept every item of his expenses with the same care and accuracy that he had bestowed on his private affairs during his farming days. Nevertheless, for much that he paid from his own pocket during the war he received no return, and he was com-

paratively a poor man when he again turned his face homeward. A few days later he arrived at Annapolis where Congress was in session, and notifying it that he was ready to resign his commission, appeared before that body at noon on December 23, 1783.

Nothing could be more simple than the little ceremony which followed, but it would be difficult to imagine a more dignified or impressive scene. Eight years earlier he had accepted the command of the army with a few modest words, making no promises save that he would do his best; and now at the height of his triumph he came to return the trust committed to his charge in the same modest fashion in which he had accepted it. No display of any kind marked his entrance to the Hall of Congress. A messenger announced his approach and he entered the room attired in full uniform, but attended by only two Aides, and, walking to the front of the chamber, seated himself in full view of the audience, with an Aide standing on either side.

Before him, on the floor of the chamber, sat a company of twenty gentlemen wearing their hats according to the custom of the Congress at that time, and behind them and in the

gallery stood a mass of spectators maintaining a dignified and impressive silence.

A pause followed, and then the presiding officer turned to the man upon whom all eyes were centered and advised him that the United States in Congress assembled were prepared to receive his communications. Thereupon he rose, and as he did so all the officials raised their hats. No applause or demonstration of any kind, save this, greeted him, and the few simple words he uttered could be plainly heard in every part of the crowded chamber. Unaffectedly congratulating the assembled company on the successful termination of the war, he craved the indulgence of retiring from the service of the country, and commending his officers and men to the favor of Congress, and "the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God," he resigned "with satisfaction the appointment which he had accepted with diffidence."

A proper response was made by the presiding official, and a few moments later Washington left the room a private citizen, and as he passed down the aisle between the seated representatives every official head was once more bared.

CHAPTER XXIX

PEACE AND PUBLIC SERVICE

It was Christmas Eve, 1783, when Washington arrived at Mount Vernon, and a happier welcome no man ever knew. Compared to the fact that he was at home once more, surrounded by his loved ones, all the honors which he had won during his absence seemed as nothing in his eyes. This was the one event to which he had longingly looked forward, for more than eight years, and to feel that he was free again to renew the life which he had left at the call of duty filled him with unspeakable joy.

Most men love their homes, but Washington fairly adored his. He knew every tree and bypath—almost every stick and stone on the place, and all the friendly, familiar objects gave him a sense of peace and security such as he had not known for many a weary day. In some respects the plantation had suffered

during the war, for there had been neither the men nor the money to keep the buildings and the fields in good condition; but the cozy homestead still remained stanch and comfortable, the crackle of a cheery fire and the welcome of his wife and adopted grandchildren awaited him, and Washington was deeply thankful and content.

For a time he seems to have been satisfied simply to wander about the place, steeping himself in the restful quiet of the scene, watching the broad, peaceful river dotted with white sails, riding at large over the wide fields and beneath the great trees, chatting with Braddock's old orderly Bishop, who had been left in a position of some responsibility during the Revolution; visiting his kennels and stables and the negro quarters—renewing his acquaintance with every well-remembered nook and corner. What a relief the silence and seclusion must have afforded him after the fretful turmoil of the Revolution, those who have visited Mount Vernon can readily understand. It lies there to-day much as he saw it then—a spot freed from all contact with the outside world—a refuge and haven from care—a hallowed acreage to dream and think in, as placid

and calm and dignified as the splendid, silent river flowing beneath its peaceful slopes.

During the first month after his return Washington wrote but few letters, but every mail brought a mass of correspondence which called for a reply, and among the earliest communications was one from his old fencing master, Van Braam, who, much against his will, had been forced to serve in a British regiment and now wrote giving an account of his adventures. Numerous other people wrote asking his advice or assistance on all sorts of subjects, and had he attempted to answer them all he would have had very little time for anything else. Even as it was, two large volumes could be filled with his replies, and during the exceptionally cold winter that followed his homecoming he was so busily employed at this task that in a large measure he neglected his own affairs.

By the Summer, however, he began to improve his property, and before long he had entirely resumed his life as a planter, giving personal attention to his crops, superintending new buildings and beautifying his grounds with the same care he had bestowed on them before the war. During the next Spring he

WASHINGTON AT MOUNT VERNON AFTER THE REVOLUTION.

laid out the serpentine road and planted many of Mount Vernon's finest trees, and in his diary, which still exists, there are entries showing the transplanting of lilacs to the north garden gate, the moving of sassafras, dogwood and red-bud trees to the shrubbery on the grass plot, the placing of mulberries, maples, black gums, poplars, and other trees near the walks, and there many of them remain to-day, living witnesses of his presence and care.

It was no feeble, white-headed old gentleman who threw himself heart and soul into this work, for both physically and mentally Washington was at this time in the prime of life. Winter and summer he rose at dawn, read or wrote till seven, breakfasted, and then mounting his horse rode over his plantations, seldom covering less than ten and often thirty miles a day. Clear-eyed, ruddy-complexioned, straight as an arrow, sitting his saddle with a grip of knee which made horse and rider one, he was the picture of health and vigor as he made his daily tours of inspection. On these occasions his usual costume was a plain blue or gray cloth coat, cassimere waistcoat, black breeches and boots; but when there was more active work to be done he did not hesitate to

lay aside his coat and labor with his workmen, and there were few whose strength could vie with his. Indeed, during the laying out of the new fields and remodeling of the grounds he had to resort to his surveying again, and day after day he was busy with his instruments, Billy, his old body-servant, serving as one of the chainmen. Billy was a negro slave, and there were many other slaves on the plantations, but Washington had come to hate slavery, and in one of his letters dated at this period he wrote: "I never mean, unless some particular circumstances should compel me to it, to possess another slave by purchase, it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted by which slavery in this country may be abolished by law." Again eleven years later he wrote: "I wish from my soul that the Legislature of this State could see the policy of a gradual abolition of slavery. It might prevent much future mischief."

Thus, even then, Washington was stretching out a hand to Lincoln.

The slave question was not in those days an important topic of conversation, but Washington's opinions on other subjects were eagerly sought and widely quoted. Visitors

from all parts of the country and many from abroad kept dropping in at Mount Vernon almost every day, and much that the host said and everything he wrote soon found its way to the public. Many of his guests were comparative strangers to Washington, but Virginian hospitality demanded that all who called be asked to stay the night, so the house was full to overflowing every day and the entry in his diary of June 30, 1785, records that Washington and his wife dined alone that day for the first time in eighteen months. But not all the visitors at Mount Vernon were chance or passing acquaintances. Lafayette came on two occasions, staying each time for a week or more, and James Madison, James Monroe, Gouverneur Morris, Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, George Mason, "Light Horse Harry" Lee, and many other famous Americans were frequently numbered among the welcome guests.

It was largely through those men and more particularly through his correspondence that Washington was kept in touch with the condition of the country, and it was with keen regret that he saw the Government of the United States growing weaker every day. The

mere fact that the various States had called themselves "United" had not made them so. Indeed, they were almost completely disunited, each one working for itself with no more interest in the others than if each had been a separate nation. In other words, America was not becoming a nation, but a mere collection of little States without power or dignity, or even self-respect. Against this tendency Washington protested on every possible occasion, freely expressing his opinion and urging the leading men of the country to use their influence to bind the States together into a respectable nation which might deserve and win success. As a General he had shown the value of team play, and now, when he insisted that united action on the part of all the States was essential to the formation of any government worthy of the name, his words reached more people and carried more weight than those of any other man in the land.

Therefore, when Congress directed that representatives from each of the States should assemble in Philadelphia in May, 1787, and try to form a national constitution, it was natural that Virginia should have chosen him as one of her delegates. But Washington had

taken no active part in the politics of the country since his retirement and he had no desire to re-enter public life. His ambition was to succeed as a planter, and he had only just begun to restore to Mount Vernon something of its former prestige. He therefore hesitated to undertake any duties which threatened to interfere with this, and at first he declined to represent Virginia at the coming convention; but being persuaded that he had no right to refuse his aid after having constantly urged the formation of a strong central government, he finally consented to act, and set out for Philadelphia on the 9th of May, 1787.

The prospects of accomplishing anything useful were not very cheerful when he first arrived upon the scene, for only a handful of delegates appeared on the day appointed for opening the proceedings, and almost two weeks elapsed before sufficient States were represented to permit the convention to be held. On May 25th, however, Washington found himself unanimously elected as the presiding officer, and for the next four months he was almost exclusively occupied with the business of framing the Constitution. Every line and almost every word in this important document

was discussed at great length, but Washington as chairman of the meetings seldom took any part in the debates. Nevertheless, his opinion had great weight with the other representatives who sought his advice in and out of the State House where the sessions were held, and without his personal influence it is doubtful if any agreement would have been reached.

Meanwhile he relieved the tedium of the work, which required his presence from five to seven hours a day, by running out to Valley Forge, not to sentimentalize over the scene of his old encampment, but to get some trout fishing in the neighboring streams; and he likewise managed to take a flying trip to Trenton where he had once made an historic catch, but where he now tried to catch perch " not very successfully," but later " with more success."

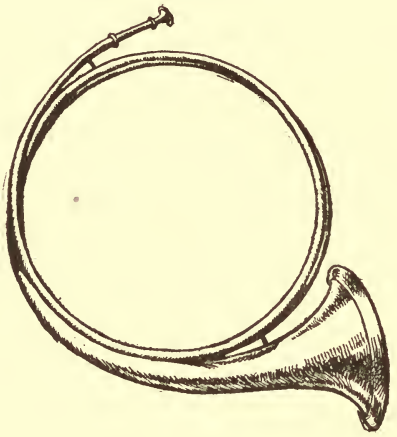
Finally, on September 17, 1787, the Constitution was accepted by the representatives of eleven out of the thirteen States, and Washington, forwarding the document to Congress, hastened back to the delights of Mount Vernon. The Constitution did not in every respect meet with his approval, but he firmly believed that it offered the best scheme of government that was possible at the moment, and

that if the various States agreed to abide by it, there was every prospect of building up a prosperous and powerful nation. "I never saw him so keen for anything in his life as he is for the adoption of the new scheme of government," wrote one of his friends to Thomas Jefferson, but in the fierce struggle which at once took place in all the States for and against the Constitution he took little or no part, and only echoes of the contest reached him in the shelter of Mount Vernon.

Here he worked and planned and played with all his accustomed zest, riding over the plantations, training a new and very wild pack of hounds which Lafayette had sent him, fishing and superintending the netting of shad in the river, where as many as three hundred were frequently caught in one haul; building a new barn along lines suggested to him by the famous English authority on agriculture, Arthur Young, attending the local races and the theater, and generally enjoying himself as only a hard-working, healthy, active man can. Those who imagine Washington as a solemn, slow-moving, statuesque human being, would do well to read his diaries and correspondence at this time, which show him as a man of ac-

tion, brimful of life and energy—the great prototype of the millions whose enterprise and enthusiasm are continuing to build up America.

On June 9, 1788, a strange little vessel sailed into the Potomac and anchored off



HUNTING HORN PRESENTED TO WASHINGTON BY LAFAYETTE.
(Drawn from the original at Mount Vernon.)

Mount Vernon. It was only about fifteen feet in length, but it was completely equipped as a full-rigged ship, with masts and cross-trees and sails, and it bore the name *Federalist*, the name by which those who favored the Constitution were known. This toy vessel which had been sent to Washington by the

merchants of Baltimore announced to him Maryland's acceptance of the Constitution, and the arrival of the tiny craft served to bring home the fact that the people throughout the country had only one man in mind for the head of the nation when they accepted the Constitution creating the office of President. Yet Washington was unwilling to think of entering public life again. "The first wish of my soul is to spend the evening of my life as a private citizen on my farm," he wrote one of his friends. But Hamilton, and other leading men of the country, were insistent that he lay aside his personal wishes in response to the general call of the country, and on April 6, 1789, when the votes of the electors were counted in New York, it was found that every ballot had been cast in his favor.

Eight days later, Charles Thomson, the aged Secretary of Congress, rode up the broad driveway of Mount Vernon and, being ushered into the reception room, delivered into Washington's hands the official letter notifying him that he had been unanimously elected as the first President of the United States. Two days later he set forth on his journey to New York, in company with Mr. Thomson and

Colonel Humphreys, and his diary for that day records as follows: "About ten o'clock I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity . . . with the best disposition to render service to my country in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectations." "My movements to the chair of government will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution," he wrote General Knox, "so unwilling am I . . . to quit a peaceful abode for an ocean of difficulties without that competency of political skill, abilities, and inclination, which are necessary to manage the helm."

From the moment he left his own gates his journey was well-nigh a continuous ovation, his neighbors and friends escorting him to the borders of Virginia, and each hamlet, village, and town through which he passed welcoming him with demonstrations of affection. At Trenton the citizens had erected a triumphal arch over the old bridge across Assanpink Creek, where he had fought off Cornwallis's attack, and as he passed over it his way was strewn with flowers.

On April 23, 1789, he arrived in New York,

being rowed across the bay from New Jersey in a splendid barge manned by thirteen pilots in white uniforms, and landing at the foot of Wall Street, walked, amid the cheers and salutes of the people, to the residence which had been prepared for him near what is now known as Franklin Square.

CHAPTER XXX

THE PRESIDENT

For a week Washington remained quietly in New York, where great preparations were being made for installing him as President. On Wall Street a fine building, known as Federal Hall, had been erected and presented to Congress, and here the inauguration was to take place. Those who feared that American liberty would be endangered by the observance of any forms whatsoever, were exceedingly critical of the arrangements made for the occasion, but it was, after all, a very simple ceremony that marked the inauguration of the first President of the United States.

Early on the morning of April 30, 1789, the bells of all the churches summoned the people to their various places of worship for the special services ordained for the day, and by the time these were concluded the military and civil procession was already moving to-

ward the Franklin house, and Wall Street and its vicinity were crowded with a dense mass of spectators. Washington left his residence shortly after twelve o'clock, but so great was the throng in the streets that his carriage did not reach Federal Hall for almost an hour, and he was obliged to alight some little distance from the building and make his way to it on foot, passing through the cheering crowd between a double line of troopers. A moment's pause followed, and then he appeared on the balcony facing Wall and Broad Streets, and behind him came John Adams, Chancellor Livingstone, Baron Steuben, General Knox, and other distinguished officers and officials. He was dressed in a plain brown-cloth suit, with metal buttons ornamented with eagles; his stockings were white silk and his shoe buckles silver; at his side he carried a steel-hilted dress sword, and his powdered hair was worn in a queue.

Never did any man receive a more genuine and heartfelt welcome than that which greeted Washington as he faced the mass of spectators, but he was evidently unprepared for the wild outburst with which he was acclaimed. It was at once a roar of triumphant thanksgiving, a

national salute, and a tribute of admiration and affection, and visibly affected by it, he stepped back for a moment to recover his composure. In another instant, however, he reappeared with Chancellor Livingstone in his official robe, and Samuel Otis, the Secretary of the Senate, bearing a Bible on a crimson cushion. With his hand upon the opened book, he then took the prescribed oath to maintain and defend the Constitution, and almost before the crowd realized that the ceremony was taking place, a crash of artillery announced that George Washington was President of the United States. A short address to the members of Congress followed, and then the new head of the nation, accompanied by the Vice President, the Senators, and Representatives, walked up Broadway to St. Paul's Church, where he occupied the pew which still bears his initials in honor of his presence at the services on that day.

Thus ended the first inaugural ceremonies, which, simple as they were, probably caused Washington more embarrassment than he had ever previously experienced, for no man had a greater dislike of display than he, and no one ever more thoroughly dreaded making

a public exhibition of himself. But though his personal tastes were those of a plain, modest gentleman, who despised notoriety of every kind, he had no intention of allowing the Presidency to become a cheap or familiar office, and almost his first official act was to devise, with Hamilton and Madison, simple but proper rules to maintain his dignity as the head of the nation. Of this came the regulations which have, with slight changes, governed the etiquette of all the Presidents since his day. In this, and in every other act of his, Washington realized that he was establishing a precedent, which would profoundly affect the future of the country, and with this idea he worked cautiously but steadily to uphold the dignity of the nation and win respect for it from both friends and foes.

The scheme of government laid down in the Constitution was as yet untried, but, determining that it should have a full and fair test, he chose for his advisers in the Cabinet only those who, like himself, believed in the Constitution and wished to see it succeed. To this end he selected Thomas Jefferson as his Secretary of State, General Knox for the War Department, Edmund Randolph for the Attor-

ney-General, and, most important of all, Alexander Hamilton for head of the Treasury, and he familiarized himself with all their duties with the same care he had exercised in managing his private affairs. He was thus not merely nominally, but actually, the head of the Government who made it his business to know all that was being done and how to do it, and who labored with unflagging energy to master every detail of the work. Hampered at first by a dangerous illness which, for a time, seriously threatened his life, he nevertheless resumed his task at the earliest possible moment, and stuck to it without sparing himself, and with no thought save that of building on a firm foundation for the future generations.

To familiarize the people of the various States with the existence of the Federal or National Government, he made a long tour through New England, visiting all the principal cities, and when John Hancock, the Governor of Massachusetts, attempted to assert the supremacy of the State over the Federal Government by forcing the President to pay him the first official visit, Washington courteously but firmly declined to dine with him, and Hancock, realizing his mistake, yielded, and at-

tended in person at the President's lodgings. This was, of course, a trifling matter, but Washington rightly understood its importance at that crisis. If any one of the States was to regard itself as superior in dignity to all the States combined, or, in other words, to the nation at large, there would be an end to all centralized government, and the United States would be a nation only in the name. It was for this reason that the President insisted on the etiquette of the occasion, and his treatment of this little incident went far to establish the national authority at a critical moment.

There were those who saw dangers to liberty, however, in all Washington's efforts to maintain the dignity of the United States, and before long he was accused of being an aristocrat and of attempting to introduce all the pomp and ceremonies of the monarchies of the Old World. But at these criticisms and complaints Washington only smiled. Pride of office had no charms for him. He had a settled purpose to make the nation self-respecting as well as respected, and if the loud-mouthed lovers of liberty had not the intelligence to distinguish between official decorum and per-

sonal pretense, it would be folly to seek the level of their comprehension. But most of the people did not require either explanation or answer. They understood the quiet, unassuming man of common sense, who steadily set in motion one wheel after another of the national machinery, and maintained a firm controlling hand, which neither home criticism nor foreign bullying could shake.

Against the clamor of those who hated England he signed a treaty with the mother country, waiving many minor rights, to gain tranquillity and a recognized place among the nations, and assumed all responsibility for the result; against the pretensions and demands of France he promptly interposed a protest and, when that country hesitated to observe a proper attitude toward the United States, he took such unmistakable measures to make the protest effective, that all attempts at bullying ceased; against the discontented Pennsylvanians, who undertook to override the laws of Congress, he marched an army, before which the mob scattered without a blow. In other words, he represented the nation as a whole on every occasion without fear or favor, trusting at all times to the common sense of

his fellow-countrymen, and with a clear vision constantly before him of the coming greatness of the Government he was upbuilding for those who were to follow him.

At the end of his first term he hesitated long and anxiously before he could make up his mind to continue in office for another four years. All his personal inclinations urged him to retire absolutely to private life, but he accepted the unanimous call of the people in 1793, and settled down once more to the task which had already taxed his strength and was steadily wearing him down. As yet there was no organized party opposed to him, but, as time went on, the foolish criticisms and accusations which had at first amused him began to take a more serious and ugly form, and they occasionally aroused him to great bitterness and wrath. Despite the calmness and reserve which he had acquired through years of experience, Washington was, like most honorable men, extremely sensitive, and to have his actions misinterpreted and his motives impugned hurt him, though they seldom provoked him to answer. It is well for Americans to remember, when they are tempted to rash accusations against honorable public servants,

that Washington was at one time driven to exclaim that he would rather be in his grave than suffer the treatment he received at the hands of those he was doing his best to serve.

During all these years he had kept close watch of Mount Vernon, sending minute directions from time to time for its development, visiting it at every possible opportunity, and eagerly looking forward to the day when he would once more be able to return there, relieved of public cares. That day came on March 4, 1797, when John Adams was inaugurated as his successor. But it was not the new President who was the center of all eyes on that occasion, but the retiring official, and when the ceremonies were completed and he passed from the Hall of Congress, the crowd, almost forgetting Adams, followed him out into the street, and accompanied him with acclamations of affection to the very door of his house.

Ten days later Mount Vernon again welcomed its master, and the man who eight years before had left it fearing that he was not equal to the duties to which he had been called, returned as one of the most famous statesmen of the world.

CHAPTER XXXI

MOUNT VERNON

A FEW days before Washington started for his home he wrote to General Knox that it was unlikely that he would ever be farther than twenty miles from Mount Vernon during the rest of his life. Twice before, he had been called from retirement, but this time he saw no possibility of anything interfering with the peaceful enjoyment of his home life, and Mount Vernon never had greater attractions for him than it presented at this time. True, the buildings had fallen somewhat into disrepair during his absence, and there was much to be done to restore the plantation to the condition in which he had left it, but his favorite adopted grandchild, Miss Nellie Custis, a girl of great beauty and charm, and Lafayette's young son, George Washington Lafayette, accompanied him from Philadelphia, and the presence of the young people added greatly to the joy of his home-coming.

But if he imagined that because he was no longer President he had ceased to be a public man, he was speedily disillusioned, for visitors from all parts of the country flocked to Mount Vernon in far greater numbers than ever before, so that the house practically became "a well-resorted inn." All sorts and conditions of people wrote him, some sending him presents, others asking questions, others requesting materials from which to write his life, others dedicating books, poems, and songs to him, or asking permission to do so, and generally making such demands on his time that he himself declared that at no period of his life had he been more engaged than during the six or eight months immediately following his return. Among the almost countless letters addressed to him about this time was one from Joseph Hopkinson, inclosing a copy of his song, "Hail Columbia," which may fairly be said to have been the first American national anthem. But little did Washington dream that the enthusiasm with which it was received throughout the land was the forerunner of another message calling him again to the country's service.

"Hail Columbia" was, however, first sung

in April, 1798, at a time when the feeling between the United States and France was exceedingly bitter, and there was every prospect of war. The French Revolution, which had driven Lafayette into exile and had resulted in his imprisonment and caused his son to seek refuge with Washington, had then almost run its course, and young Lafayette had already returned to France to greet his father; but the attitude of the French Government, which had long been offensive toward the United States, had at last taken such form as to rouse universal indignation in America. John Marshall, Charles Pinckney, and Elbridge Gerry, the American envoys who had been sent to arrange a treaty with France, were received with marked disrespect, and the agents of the French Government finally went so far as to demand money from them before they would consider any treaty at all. Marshall and Pinckney accordingly departed, and when their report of what had happened was received the whole country showed a resentment which threatened to end in war. It was at this crisis that Pinckney uttered the famous phrase "Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute!" "Hail Columbia" was sung by

patriotic throngs; an army of ten thousand men was authorized by Congress, and the supreme command was offered to Washington, with the title of Lieutenant General. Washington himself did not believe that the two countries which had so lately professed warm friendship for each other would be driven to the point of war, but he saw that unless the United States showed itself ready to defend its honor and dignity, it would lose the respect of other nations, and he heartily approved of prompt and vigorous action.

"At the epoch of my retirement," he wrote the President, " an invasion of these States by any European power, or even the probability of such an event happening in my days, was so far from being contemplated by me, that I had no conception that that, or any other occurrence, would arise in so short a period which could turn my eyes from the shade of Mount Vernon. . . . But in case of actual invasion . . . I certainly should not intrench myself under the cover of age and retirement if my services should be required by my country . . ."

Thus, at the age of sixty-six, Washington once more found himself at the head of an

army, actively preparing to take the field, with Alexander Hamilton as his second in command, and many of his other old comrades flocking to his side. For a while all was bustle and excitement, and the new Lieutenant General was soon obliged to leave Mount Vernon and make Philadelphia his headquarters; but before the close of 1799 all fear of war had disappeared, and Washington once more laid aside his sword and returned to his loved Mount Vernon.

Meanwhile Miss Nellie Custis had become engaged to Lawrence Lewis, one of Washington's favorite nephews, and her wedding was fixed for February 22, 1799, the general's sixty-seventh birthday. At first Miss Custis was anxious that Washington should grace the occasion by wearing his new uniform as Lieutenant General, but when he shook his head and appeared in the buff and blue in which he had fought the Revolution, the young bride threw her arms about his neck and declared he was right and that she would rather see him in his old uniform than in any other dress.

But though Washington was soon relieved of all military cares, he continued to be busily

engaged on all sorts of work from morning till night. Not the least important of the many claims upon his time was the superintendence of the erection of the public buildings in the future city of Washington, or, the Federal City, as it was then called. At that time it was practically nothing but a spot on the map, and not much more than a beginning had been made upon the plans, yet Washington saw the future National Capital as plainly as he foresaw the wonderfully rapid growth and expansion of the whole United States. In May, 1798, he wrote: "A century hence, if this country keeps united (and it is surely its policy and interest to do so), it will produce a city, though not as large as London, yet of a magnitude inferior to few others in Europe, on the banks of the Potomac, where one is now establishing for the permanent seat of Government of the United States."

That prophecy has been more than fulfilled, and there is many another prediction of Washington's which Americans can read with profit, if not with equal satisfaction. The master of Mount Vernon did not, however, allow his many public duties to detract from his interest and pride in his plantations. In

April, 1799, he began a careful survey of his property, doing the work himself, with much the same keenness as he had displayed in his boyish days, when he had first made rough drawings of its fields. Indeed, he continued this work at odd intervals up to November, 1799, and on December 10th of that year he completed a plan for the development of the plantation, giving minute instructions to his manager for the sowing of the fields, advising as to the rotation of the crops, and generally presenting sufficient details for carrying on the work for a series of years. Every item of this document, which covered fully thirty pages, displayed all the thoroughness and precision of his most active years, and the loving care which he bestowed upon it shows that the preservation and maintenance of his property were among the dearest wishes of his heart.

The day after he finished this labor of love Lord Fairfax, the successor of his old friend and patron, dined with him at Mount Vernon, and the next morning he started out at ten o'clock on his usual inspection of the plantations, remaining in the saddle until late in the afternoon. That same day he wrote

Hamilton, warmly approving his plan for establishing the military academy which was later located at West Point, and which had been the subject of several of his recommendations to Congress. Friday, December 13, 1799, brought a heavy fall of snow, which prevented him from taking his usual trip on horseback, but, although not feeling well, he spent the afternoon in marking some trees which he wished removed for the improvement of the grounds between the house and the river, and in the evening he made the same careful note of the weather in his diary, which had been his daily custom for some years. During the night, however, he was suddenly taken extremely ill with acute laryngitis, and before long he became convinced that he could not live. Doctors were called in and various remedies were tried, but without avail. Washington's whole thought during the few hours that followed was to make no complaint and try to ease the anxiety of his wife and friends. "I am not afraid to go," he told his physician, and as his secretary sat beside him holding his hand, he withdrew it and calmly felt his own pulse. Thus bravely and serenely Washington passed away, and so quietly did the end

come that those watching beside him scarcely realized that he was dead.

Four days later he was buried in the family vault, only a short distance from the house, on the slope overlooking the majestic river which had gladdened his eyes for so many years. Only a few neighbors and friends, and a small company of soldiers and local officials attended the funeral, which was marked by the simplicity and modesty which had always honored the man. Out on the river a schooner fired a solemn salute of minute guns, and cannon on the shore boomed reply; the troops marched past the house, followed by the General's horse bridled and saddled, bearing holsters and pistols and led by two grooms in black, and behind them Washington's body, carried by officers and Freemasons, was borne to its final rest.

Thus ended the career of the man who, in addition to his other distinctions, is fairly entitled to that of being the first American. The fact that he was the descendant of an ancient English family and was reared in English traditions, does not, as more than one distinguished writer has observed, in any way detract from his Americanism. He was among

the first to recognize and appreciate the genius of the people of this country, and to comprehend the possibilities that lay within them, and to the development of those possibilities and the cultivation of that genius he was intensely, unswervingly loyal. What American has a higher or a better claim to patriotism than this?

Washington was not a brilliant man; he was not scholarly or profound; he was not even particularly gifted. But he was industrious without being a slave to work; he was thorough to a fault; he had a deep appreciation of honor, the courage and manliness to live true to his highest thought, and the broad-mindedness to compromise with those who differed with him where anything but honor and principle were concerned. He was not a genius, but he was a master of common sense; he was not an impossible hero, but he was a severely tested human being who conquered himself; he was not the greatest soldier that the world has ever seen, but he was certainly the most unselfish and probably the most successful statesman known to history.

It is for these human qualities, revealing the possibilities that lie with us all, that Wash-

ington is honored throughout the world. It is in recognition of this that each State in this mighty Union, and many of the nations of the earth, contributed a stone to the majestic shaft that forms his monument to-day. It is for remembrance of this that America has preserved Mount Vernon, where the presence of the man is felt and his spirit breathes an inspiring benediction over the land he loved.

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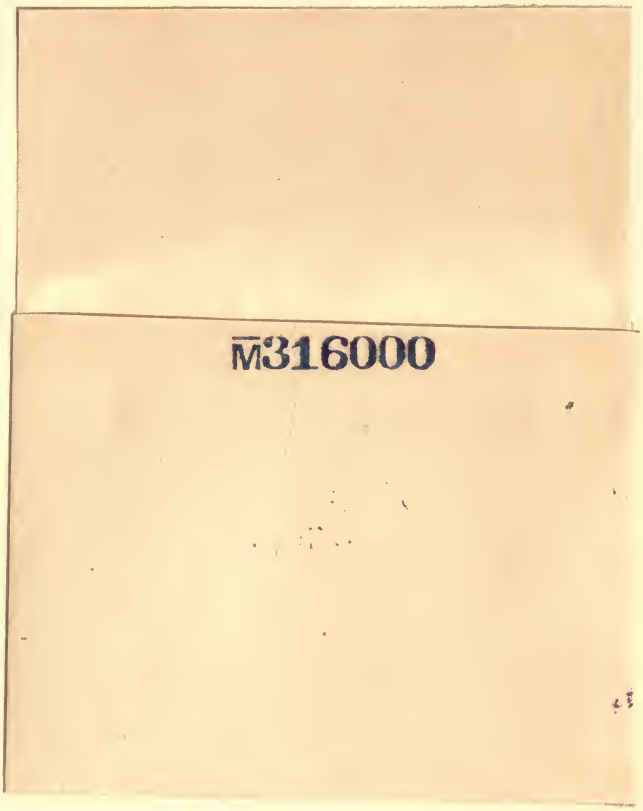
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